

SERIAL STORY OF SPIRITED AND DRAMATIC INTEREST BEGINS NEXT WEEK.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



"IS IT TRUE, ENID, THAT YOU HAVE FOUND ME THE LEAST BIT NECESSARY FOR YOUR HAPPINESS?" SAID GABRIEL.

## THE MASTER OF THE MILL

[A NOVELETTE.]

[COMPLETE IN THIS NUMBER.]

### CHAPTER I.

**M**Y dearest, it is indeed hard to leave you, and for so long a period; but I cannot afford to decline the appointment; it is exceptionally good, and Lord Heneage holds out hopes of something better to follow!"

The girl sighed; there was a wistful look in the lovely grey eyes, and the mouth had

a sorrowful curve; but she answered in a low, firm voice,—

"You must go, dear Maurice; and what does it matter how far we are apart when we are so sure each of the other's love? I would not for worlds hold you back. In the years that lie before us, you might reproach me for such selfishness—and no such chance might come again to you. Neglected opportunities never return. Go, dear heart, and, oh! may Heaven bless you in all your ways!"

Maurice Audley took the girl into a close embrace.

"Heaven has already blessed me beyond my deserts," he said, "in giving me, you! Enid, my darling, how shall I bear to leave you? You have made the happiness of all my life—and yet it is for your sake I go. I never was tempted so much before, to envy the rich!"

She smiled up at him then—

"I envy no one on earth now," and the light in her lovely eyes gave meaning to her words, "and at no time was I covetous of riches—I am quite content to have enough."

"A woman is not often so ambitious as a man," answered Maurice, "and if I had but a small certain income there is so much I could do. Do you think I should rest content to scribble critiques for any editor who will condescend to accept them? No; I would devote myself to writing and publishing a novel which should not only bring me fame, but be the stepping-stone to fortune. But I will never sell the copyright of the first fruits of my brain."

He spoke with all the arrogance of early manhood, with a full and perfect faith in his own powers, which was not perhaps without

good foundation. There were those who said Maurice Audley was a genius, and certainly Enid Lovel was willing to believe so.

"Who knows," she said, dreamily, "that this appointment may not give you the means to realise that dream? Oh, Maurice! how proud I should be to hear your name on every lip—to feel that, despite your great, good fortune, you still loved poor, little me, above and beyond all others; and yet, deep down in my heart, I think there would be a trembling fear, lest you should grow weary or ashamed of me!" and then she so clung about him that he kissed her again and again, declaring that, without her, life would go on with broken wing; that she made his world, and was his dearest treasure.

How fast the moments flew! To-night he was to leave her for two long years, and as yet he had scarcely made any preparations for the journey before him. The girl was first to remember this.

"Maurice," she said, gently. "You have much to do; you must stay no longer. It will not do to lose your train after all."

He rose reluctantly. "I have to pack, of course, and there are one or two little accounts to settle. Enid—I did not guess how hard it would be to say good-bye. Even now it rests with you to say whether I go or stay!"

"You must go!" she answered, firmly, although all her heart was clamouring out to her, "Let him stay!" "It is not like you to be weak, and there is a glorious future before you; no don't kiss me again—not now! Don't you know there is a limit to my courage too?" and she faintly smiled, "You must set me a good example!"

"I suppose so!" sighing, "but, perhaps, even you, sweetheart, do not guess how cruel this parting will be to me!"

Ah! did she not? Did she not by her own sharp pangs? But womanlike, she did not speak of herself.

"You will come up to-night?" she asked, "It is on your way to the station."

"I shall be round at six; my train does not leave till seven; but I'll wish Mrs. Lovel and the youngsters good-bye now. This evening I want you all to myself. You will come down to the gate to meet me!" (with a certain masterful air which became him well, and which Enid so admired), "we will say our good-bye there."

"Yes, now let me take you to mamma; she is giving Dot and Teddy a lesson in geography. Poor mites!"

She led the way along the broad old-fashioned hall into a large, low, airy room, where sat a middle-aged lady and two children.

"I have come to say good-bye, Mrs. Lovel," announced Maurice. "I am off to-night, you know—needs must when somebody, who shall be nameless, drives!"

"Of course it is a great wrench for you," Mrs. Lovel said, sympathetically, "but it is also a splendid opening; and you and Enid are so young you can well afford to wait awhile before thinking of marriage!"

"I am twenty-five, Mrs. Lovel!"

"And Enid nineteen; I should be sorry to see my daughter a wife at such an early age! My dear, fondly as I am attached to you, I would not give her to you yet. When you return she will be a woman—absence will have tested your mutual love—and I shall feel satisfied of your happiness. Now, children, wish Maurice good-bye. It will be a long time before you see him again."

The young man submitted to Dot's kisses and Teddy's bear-like hugs. He was not very fond of children—and it must be confessed the young Lovels were rather unruly. He parted with Mrs. Lovel on the friendliest terms, and then went away to his lodgings to complete his preparations, and Enid waited in sick suspense for the last word to be spoken, the last kiss given.

Maurice Audley and she had been lovers now for nine happy months. They had met first at the Rectory where Maurice was assis-

tant-tutor to the many boarders the Reverend Borrowdale received.

The young man's prospects were by no means good; he had nothing to call his own, save that earned by real arduous labour. For, although of gentle birth, he inherited no property, all his little fortune having been spent on his education, and the expenses attending life in a university town. But he wrote clever critiques and articles for popular papers, which added not a little to his income. He was so quiet and steady, led such an irreproachable life, and was so devoted to Enid, that Mrs. Lovel willingly gave consent to their engagement, which, perforce, must be a long one.

His poverty did not frighten the gentle mother. Had not she and Dr. Lovel started life together on the slenderest of incomes? And had they not been so happy that when he died, folks thought she would die too? Had not his untimely death aged and changed her in all things but her deep-rooted charity and unselfishness?

It was for her children only she had struggled through that long and terrible illness following her widowhood. It was to them she devoted herself from first to last. She had a small annuity which maintained the little family in comfort, and Enid, who was decidedly musical, received pupils, and so was no expense. Will, who was seventeen, was in the merchant service, and as all the children between him and the ten-year-old twins had died, Mrs. Lovel never felt the sting of poverty, and the days went pleasantly by at Leaside Cottage.

But now the mother's heart was sore for her first-born. The gentle, lovesome Enid, who had shared all her joys and sorrows since when a little thoughtful mite of nine she had crept to "mamma's" side and vainly tried to comfort her because "papa" had gone away and they would not see him for such a weary while.

Maurice Audley was going away, and there were those who envied his good fortune.

Through the Rector's influence and his own undoubted fitness for the post he had been appointed travelling tutor and companion to the only son of Lord Heneage—the Honourable Ferris Heneage—at a salary of two hundred per annum and all expenses paid.

The young aristocrat was weak and easily led, though not altogether vicious, and his father had dreaded the temptations of university life for him. So at the age of nineteen he had decided to send him on a foreign tour with a tutor who was not too old to share in youthful frolics, and not so young as to engage in any mad escapade.

His choice fell on Maurice, and when the engagement had been ratified his lordship wrote:—

"If you fulfil your somewhat difficult duty (as I have every belief you will) I can promise you a certain and remunerative position when your present engagement closes. In the meanwhile, do your best with and for my son, and you will not find me ungrateful."

It was of this promise that Maurice Audley thought as he walked that evening to Leaside Cottage. It was month was March, and under the hedgerows the violets had begun to blossom, and even the primroses showed here and there a pale bud. The willows and alders had little knots along their slender branches, which spoke to any lover of nature of the near future when they, with all the world, would break into tender, delicate green.

Over the gate which opened into the Lovels' garden little vivid leaves were shining amongst the darker green of ivy; and under the saffron and pale blue sky, with a white wrap loosely twisted about her head and shoulders, stood Enid.

The evening was cold, with a suspicion of frost, but the girl felt neither wind nor frost as she stretched out her hands to her lover.

"I came as soon as I could," he said, as he entered and put an arm about her. "There was more to do than I thought. Enid, my

dear one, my dear one, shall we ever stand together thus again?" And to the trembling girl it seemed a voice sighed through the empty garden, "Never again! never again!"

She clung to him in a passion of pain. She did not seek now to hide how much she loved him, how much she grieved that he must go. Whatever happened in the years before them she would have him remember what he was then to her, and how her heart was all but broken because they needs must part.

"Speak to me!" he whispered. "Speak to me, sweetheart! Let me hear you say again and again, 'I love you!'"

The lovely, tearful eyes met his. "I love you!" she said, simply. "Oh, Maurice! oh, Maurice—what shall I say? How can I bid you think of me, who shall think of and pray for you by night and day? Do not forget me—or if, for your happiness and welfare you do forget—remember I shall not blame you. How could I when I have loved you once?"

"And shall our love not last with our lives?" he asked. "Forgetfulness of you would be impossible. Why will you darken our last moments with such doubts as these? My beloved! my beloved! you are all the world to me!"

With a little satisfied sigh she put up her hand and touched his cheek, then she lifted her face and kissed him once solemnly, as though in kissing she had blest him.

"You will write me often, Enid? You will tell me all that is passing round you? I am such a jealous fellow. I shall be torturing myself lest in my absence some other—worthier than I—may steal you from me, my darling! my darling! Don't you think I feel how little I deserve my treasure? But Heaven knows how dearly I prize you, how earnestly I will strive to atone to you for this enforced separation through all the years to come. Kiss me now, and promise to keep faith with me until I return to you—and then, it must be farewell."

She laid her little hands in his, and looked steadfastly into his eyes.

"You, and you alone, shall fill my heart and claim my thoughts. Until you, of your own will and pleasure, cast me aside I will cling to you with all my soul!"

In the depth of his sorrow he laughed that he could for a moment dream he should weary of her; and then he kissed her lips, her cheek, her brow; and, strong man as he was, trembled and grew sick at heart at the thought of all those long, long months when he would hunger and hunger all in vain for the sight of her sweet face, the sound of her low and tender voice.

"Good-bye!" he whispered, hoarsely, again and again, coupling with that one word all endearing epithets; and she, faint and spent with the passion of grief and love consuming her, at last thrust him with gentle hands a little aside.

"Let us part now," she said, "whilst we have strength. I am weak as a child to-night. Do not let me play the coward now. I want to speed you with smiles, not tears. Heaven's grace go with you, dear!" and then she slipped from his embracing arms, and he saw her face vaguely through the gathering night—her dear, pale face, with the wide, sorrowful eyes and quivering mouth.

Without a word he turned and went his way, not daring to look back once at the little young form by the gate.

And when she could see him no longer Enid bowed her head upon her hands, and wept awhile as though her very heart would break. Then sighing heavily she went back to the house.

Mrs. Lovel met her in the hall. "He has gone, dear," she said, laying caressing hands upon the girl's shoulders. "Poor child! it is hard for you now to bear, but this separation will only teach each the other's true value, and two years will quickly pass. Besides, there is just a chance Lord Heneage will recall his son to England for a



week or two in the course of a few months, and then Maurice will be able to run down to Pennethorne. Now, dear, go to your own room—I will come to you presently—and try to rest. It has been a hard day for you!"

And Enid, glad to be alone, obeyed. There by her little white bed she prayed for him whose love was the crowning glory of her life, and passionately entreated Heaven to bring him back to her, to be with him in all his going out and coming in, to bless him with its choicest blessings.

Then she laid down upon her bed, worn by sorrow and weeping. Quite late Mrs. Lovel went into her room.

The girl was lying with her face resting upon her clasped hands, the long dark lashes were wet with tears. The mother stooped, and kissing her cheek lightly, stole away lest she should awaken her.

## CHAPTER II.

"Enid, I have a most wonderful piece of news for you," said Mrs. Lovel, about a week after Maurice and his charge had started for Spain, "the old mills are to reopen after twenty years. Men are already at work, and I suppose alterations and repairs are to be carried on most extensively!"

"Oh, dear," said Enid, letting her hands fall upon the book before her, "Pennethorne will sink to the level of a factory town. It is very nice as it is!"

"But all the same it is in anything but a flourishing condition," smiled her mother, "and I suppose the new owner is immensely rich and very philanthropic. He is going to build model cottages for his 'hands,' each with a nice piece of garden ground. He will pay them well, and their hours will not be long."

"He must be a modern Quixote," said Enid. "Pray, what is his name, from whence does he hail (as the Yankees say), is he young or old, and has he yet arrived?"

"I'll try to answer your questions in rotation," laughing. "He is called Gabriel Dundas, he comes from Bristol, he is apparently thirty years old, and at present is lodging at Mrs. Cornford's. For the rest, he is very tall—six feet two, I should say—broad in proportion, with a fine face, and calm, grand eyes. He wears a close-cropped beard and a heavy moustache, and when he speaks he does so in a low, musical voice, which one feels is capable of any and every inflection."

"You have both seen and spoken to this rare bird?" Enid said, a little languidly. "Well, mamma, however much you may be prepossessed in his favour, I vow I shall hate him if he spoils our lovely lanes and walks, and turns Pennethorne into a refuge for coarse men and slatternly women. Why could not he take his mills and cottages elsewhere?"

Mrs. Lovel smiled.

"Aren't you a little unreasonable, Enid?"

"Oh," cried precocious Dot, "don't you know Maurice's letter is a post late? and Sisie looked so disappointed when eleven came and old Nobbias never called. I think it must be awful to have sweethearts!"

"I think you had best get your hat and join Teddy in the garden," her mother remarked, severely. "Little girls should be seen but not heard," so Dot went off in high dudgeon, and a pupil arriving, Enid was carried out of herself, and forgot about the letter until the next delivery was due.

Then she ran down to the gate, and old Nobbias, with a friendly smile, handed her a large square envelope.

"Here it is, Miss Enid, and I hope it brings good news. You're looking fine and well" (as the colour mounted to her cheeks), "and I'm pleased to see it. Good evenin', miss."

Then, as he trudged on his way, the girl ran to the little arbour where so many happy hours had been spent, and read and re-read those dear words until they seemed imprinted on heart and brain alike.

Was ever woman so happy in her love as she? Was ever woman so blessed? She asked

herself these questions again and again, answering always "No."

She was very, very happy then, and no thought of woe to come crossed her mind or troubled her heart.

Maurice loved her. Ah! then what was there left to desire save his quick return?

She walked down the trim path. It was late in May, and the borders were beautiful with blue-bells, "none so pretty," and a host of early flowers. Above her were the snow-white canopies of ancient hawthornes, the yellow tassels of laburnum, the heavy, sweet blooms of the lilacs.

She drew a deep breath of delight. What a fair world it was! How impossible it seemed that sorrow and sin could find any abiding place here.

Her eyes wandered to the distant mills.

"They will spoil it all," she thought, regretfully. "I shall lose the glimpses of hills beyond, and the horrid smoke will disfigure the whole place. Maurice will hardly recognise it when he returns."

The little gate swung open, a tall, a very tall man stooped beneath the over arching ivy, and came to meet her.

She recognised him at once by her mother's description, and stood in the narrow pathway waiting for him to join her, wondering what could be his errand there.

"I feel myself an intruder," he said, lifting his hat, "but the Rector is suddenly indisposed, and Mrs. Braithe asked me to call here for a certain invaluable medicine Mrs. Lovel conceals. She said it would take very little time to prepare."

"Mamma is out, but I know what Mr. Braithe requires. I can get it ready, and will take it at once to the Rectory."

"I could not trouble you so far; the Rector would not wish it."

"Jenny (our one maid) is a poor, nervous body, and it is growing dark. I am not afraid. I will take the draught," and she began to move towards the house. But Mr. Dundas accommodating his steps to hers, said:

"I cannot allow that. Make me your messenger, Miss Lovel."

She looked swiftly up at him. He had a weary look, like that of a man who has toiled long hours.

"No," she answered, "I will go. The walk will be good for me, and your way lies in an opposite direction to the Rectory."

"I will wait here until you are ready," Mr. Dundas said, in quiet tones. "There are a number of rough men in Pennethorne just now. I cannot permit you to go alone."

The colour flamed into her face.

"In Pennethorne I have never been insulted! And—pardon me, Mr. Dundas, it is you who are bent upon introducing the rough element!"

There was a strange look in his face, in his grand, majestic eyes, as he answered:

"The 'rough element' might be rough no longer if some few with large hearts and broad sympathies could be found to lift it from the mire. Miss Lovel, I am waiting for the medicine. If you will go, I must beg you to let me walk with you. Otherwise, I utterly refuse to allow you to leave this garden!"

He spoke with the air of a man accustomed to obedience. And although Enid's heart revolted against his authority without a word, she went back to the house; but she would not invite him to enter. So he waited with all apparent patience for her return, and presently she came out, bearing a little basket, which he at once took from her.

They walked some few yards in silence, then Gabriel Dundas said:—

"I suppose you, in common with many ladies, regard me as the enemy of Pennethorne!" and he smiled down amusedly at her. "Really, I ought to be aggrieved."

"I don't think the mills will be an improvement!" Enid said, a trifle sharply. "Pennethorne is very nice as it is."

"It is very deadly lively, and property is at a discount. There are houses empty all over

the place. I mean to fill them. The place is falling into a state of decay pitious to see."

"Better so, than it should be transformed into a den of wickedness. I dread the advent of your employees."

"Pardon! I don't think you quite understand the 'factory hand,' pure and simple. I grant you the men are often rough and dissolute, the women bold and slatternly; but you've got to consider their training before you condemn them. And under their coarse and rugged exteriors often there will beat a heart of gold, a dogged faithfulness, which well might shame us who are more favoured. What they need is sympathy and a firm hand to guide them until they are capable of walking alone."

He spoke with enthusiasm, and her anger against him melted as she looked into his grand face, so indescribably softened now.

"I did not stay to reflect," she said, gently, "and my life has been so quiet, so sheltered, that perhaps I do not sufficiently realise the temptations of those you wish to befriended. Then, too, we are a great deal behind the times here, and do not care for changes; but we shall grow accustomed to them."

"I hope so. And perhaps when the mills are finished, you will allow me to show you and Mrs. Lovel over them. Here is the Rectory. I will not go in again, but will wait you here," and Enid went in alone.

She did not stay long, as she found Mr. Braithe much better, and she remembered with a sense of shyness that Gabriel Dundas was pacing up and down beyond the gates.

He at least never forgot that homeward walk beneath the clear moonlit sky. Once he paused to gather some crimson may, once to secure a cluster of chestnut blossoms, and he talked in low tones on topics likely to interest his companion.

But though she answered him yes and no, Enid heard little or nothing of his discourse, because in her heart she was repeating again and yet again the loving words Maurice had written.

She did not invite him to enter the little garden, but wished him good-bye at the gate.

Mrs. Lovel had returned, and she met Enid in the hall.

"I was starting to meet you," she said. "It is late, and I felt nervous. How is Mr. Braithe now?"

"Better. Mamma, I have both seen and talked with your paragon; in fact, he left me but a moment since. I agree with you, he is very nice, but I am not reconciled yet to the idea of the mills. I am afraid it will be a very difficult matter to convert me to the belief that Pennethorne will be improved by them. Now, shall we have supper? It is very late!"

The work of repairing the mills went on merrily, and beyond them, in the course of erection, were the model cottages. And even Enid was obliged to own they would be pretty places when finished.

Gabriel Dundas was a busy man in those days, superintending personally all the work in hand.

"If you want a thing well done, you must do it yourself," he said, with a quiet smile.

So the drainage and building, the laying out of garden ground, went on under his watchful eye, and the progress made was wonderful.

A lovely old-fashioned house called The Manor was for sale, and he bought that for his own residence.

"I hate new houses," he said to Mr. Braithe. "I like a place with old associations clinging about it. The Manor will suit me beautifully, there are so many legends rife about it."

So The Manor was furnished from garret to basement, a staff of servants engaged, and Gabriel Dundas took up residence there.

Next the mills were finished and opened, the "hands" poured in, and Pennethorne regarded them with something akin to dismay.

It was such a respectable little town, and

these people were alien to their ideas of respectability.

The cottages were not yet completed, so the "hands" lodged in the adjacent villages, coming noisily into the town at early morning, leaving noisily at six in the evening.

They were such a careless and, for the most part good-natured people, fond of horse-play and practical jokes; full of a sturdy independence, and a strong idea of their own rights. And it was upon such material Gabriel proposed to work.

He had set aside a portion of the estate for a recreation ground. There was to be cricket for the boys, swings and other amusements for the girls; in the winter he purposed holding night schools and "penny-readings."

And yet, with all this work on hand, he found time to call often at Leafdale Cottage.

He liked talking to the gentle widow, the children amused him, and then—well then, there was Enid to look at. Enid with her sweet flower-like face, her starry eyes, and crown of brown curls and braids. And the oftener he saw her the greater grew his admiration.

She was so loving and patient with those tiresome youngsters, so infinitely, yet unconsciously, tender towards the dear mother. And in all she said and did there was a quiet grace peculiarly her own that appealed to Gabriel, as nothing in any woman had appeared before.

No one dreamed of danger to him, no one thought it necessary to speak of Maurice to him. All Pennethorne knew of Enid's engagement, and all Pennethorne took it for granted the "Master of the Mills" was not ignorant of it.

So he drifted with the stream, and even before he guessed it, his heart had gone from him, and Gabriel was not a man to love lightly, or lightly to forget.

The golden summer came, ripened, and died in the arms of a glorious autumn; the cottages were all but finished, the night school, "spick and span," rose majestically above them, and Pennethorne was growing reconciled to all these changes, and, if the truth must be told, rather enjoyed them. The tradesmen were flourishing as they had not done for long years, and there was not an empty house to be seen. Gabriel was naturally pleased with the reformation he had effected.

"Really," he said, with a laugh, to Enid, "I look on myself as the patron and benefactor of the town! You are not angry with me now for waking Pennethorne from its reprehensible sleep?"

"I am angry still that you have spoiled my prettiest view," she answered with mock gravity, "and now, if one has a longing to escape from bricks and mortar, one must walk so far to do it, that one feels it impossible to penetrate to the country! No, Mr. Dundas, I regard you distinctly as our evil genius," and then she lifted her sweet face to his and laughed, such a low, liquid laugh. "There are times when I am wicked enough to wish all your pretty buildings might fall like the house built upon sand."

"This is very awful," said Gabriel, looking down from his great height. "I had no idea Miss Lovel you were so vindictive. And I had been hoping all along you would help me with my night schools, and sometimes (as a very great favour) sing at my entertainments. You have just the sympathetic voice which appeals so powerfully to my poor people, and, at least, you'll be just enough to acknowledge that they have not flagrantly violated any law of the land up to this date."

The gleam of mischief died out of Enid's eyes.

"I was not altogether in earnest," she said, gently, "and I will gladly help you if I can. If you think my singing will please them, I will sing as often as you please; but I should be a failure at the school, I am not clever at

all—I should feel just a wee bit like an impostor!"

He looked disappointed.

"You would be a power at the school; there are dozens of the hands who cannot even read. Won't you help me there?"

She hesitated a moment, then she said—

"I will take those if you wish it."

"I certainly do, and although you may not believe it, many of the poor souls are so sensitive they would not acknowledge their ignorance to half my kind volunteer assistants. Miss Braithe is very good and clever, but she rubs them the wrong way—with many, many thanks I leave them in your hands. I propose to have our first reading next Thursday, beginning at seven-thirty. That will give the lads and lasses ample opportunity to make themselves respectable, and during the interval coffee and biscuits will be served—they will want some inducement to come at first."

"You think of everything," the girl said, a note of admiration in her voice, "and you have your people's welfare so much at heart."

"I feel responsible for them," he answered, gravely, "and I want our first entertainment to be a great success. The church choir will kindly give some glees; Miss Braithe and Mr. Cornford have promised a song each and a duet. You shall give us what you will, and, really, I see no need for you to attend rehearsal."

"Thank you. And what is to be your contribution to the performance?"

"I am going to give a couple of readings. I don't sing, you know. My musical education was sadly neglected," he added, with a smile, "but in time I want to organise a singing class for my folks. It would be a wonderful success."

They had now reached the gate, and Gabriel pleaded—

"May I not come in? It is quite early, Miss Lovel."

"The children have not yet gone to bed, Mr. Dundas, and you always make them troublesome. I must decline to admit you to-night."

"I feel like the Peri shut out from Paradise—a gigantic Peri, it is true, so there is all the more room for disappointment in my body! laughing out then. "Miss Lovel, you have a heart of stone for all your seeming gentleness."

"Mr. Dundas, I resent your words," she answered, lightly. "Take care I do not punish them by forgetting my engagement to sing on Thursday." I am quite capable of such conduct."

"Towards me! Oh, yes, but you would not treat my people so cruelly!"

"I am not sure. Good-night!" and with a little bow she left him.

### CHAPTER III.

The night for Gabriel's entertainment arrived, but Mrs. Lovel was indisposed, so that Enid went alone. Her first song was not until rather late in the evening, and she sat on the platform beside Miss Braithe, listening to the other performers, watching curiously the gaily-dressed lasses and lads who had come to see "what sort o' fun the master purvided."

Gabriel's first reading tickled them immensely. It was the Trial scene from "Pickwick Papers," and the hearty roars of laughter, which broke out now and again, were sufficient testimony to their enjoyment.

He read with infinite humour, doing justice to the great man whose name shall shine in the page of literature so long as England and an Englishman survives, and when he had finished such a shout of enthusiasm rose that Enid laughed until she was weary, although she felt proud, too, of her friend's success. Then it was her turn to sing, and, trembling a little, she rose, and leant upon the handrail before her. She had no music—she

knew her ballads too well to need it—and she had been careful to choose such as she thought and hoped would please her strange audience.

The sweet, pure voice rose and fell, and over the people stole a deep hush. It was "The Distant Shore" she sang, and they listened with breathless delight until the closing words:—

"Be of good cheer, poor hearts,  
At rest on the distant shore,  
Where thou and thy love walk hand in hand,  
Ever and ever more!"

Then, oh! what a fury of applause greeted her. She must sing again; they would not let her go.

She was a little pale with emotion, a little afraid of the excitement she had wrought amongst them; but after a momentary hesitation she broke into the pathetic ballad, "The Old Arm Chair," and throwing all her soul into it, forgot her audience, the eager eyes fixed upon her—all save her subject, and came back only to the present when Gabriel, taking her hand, led her away amidst the cheers of "his people."

Then came the interval. Afterwards the Master of the Mills read the death scene of Little Nell, and even he, who knew his people well, had hardly reckoned upon the effect it would produce upon them.

Women bowed their heads and wept unrestrainedly; men, ashamed of such emotion, pulled their caps over their eyes and furtively wiped away their unwonted tears; and when Gabriel made an end, a deep breath passed through the hall, and for a while not a word disturbed the intense silence, and then—well, then, never had such an ovation been heard in Pennethorne; and those who had been afraid Gabriel's choice would be above his employees' understanding, acknowledged that he held the keynote to their minds and hearts alike.

Altogether this first "reading" was a brilliant success, and when the evening ended, happy but tired Enid walked homewards beside Gabriel.

Leafdale Cottage lay wide of the town, and presently they left their companions far behind, and were to all intents and purposes alone. Then the girl spoke out from the fulness of her heart.

"You have begun a great and good work, Mr. Dundas."

"Will you help me carry it on?" he asked, quickly.

For a moment she did not understand, then as her eyes met the shining light in the deep blue ones bent upon her, all her soul melted with pity for his pain, and, putting out her little hands with an almost tragic gesture, she cried:—

"Oh, hush! oh, hush! Mr. Dundas. I never dreamed of this. I—I—"

"I have frightened you," he said, ever so gently. "I spoke too suddenly, but my love for you is not of sudden growth. From our first meeting my heart has been drawn from me to you, and now, my dear, I give my life into your hands to do as you will wish it!"

The drooping face was inexpressibly sad, the lovely eyes were full of tears.

"Has no one told you the truth?" she asked. "I never for a moment supposed you were ignorant of it. Mr. Dundas, I am already engaged!"

The blow was so sudden, so bitter, that under the clear moonlight his face showed white and drawn. He drew his breath hard like one spent with running, and Enid was afraid to look at him.

Then he said in a strange, calm voice:

"It would have been kinder to have told me this before," and that was his only reproach.

"If I had guessed—if only I had guessed," Enid broke out, "but I never dreamed there was that in me to win your great and noble heart; and now—now I shall lose your friendship, the friendship I have learned to prize."



Oh! Mr. Dundas, can you ever forgive me?" and then, to his dismay, she burst into passionate tears.

The sight of her grief had the effect of restoring his self-control as nothing else could have done.

He took one little cold hand in his, and, holding it in a warm, firm clasp, said:

"Don't do that, Enid. I cannot bear to think I have made you unhappy, and my reproach was unjust. Dear, I have no one to blame but myself. Never by word or look have you given me reason to hope that one day you would come to me, my dear and honoured wife. All the fault is mine, as I hope all the pain may be, and for the rest, we may still be friends if you will forget and forgive to-night's presumption!"

She lifted her eyes to his; they were eloquent with feeling, and the tears still glittered upon the long lashes.

"If I may still enjoy your regard," she said, humbly, "I shall be proud and glad. You cannot tell how great an honour I have felt it to be your chosen ally, and how much fuller my life is because of you!"

He lifted the little hand and kissed it gravely.

"Let all things be between us as though this had never happened. I am not going to deny that I am sorely disappointed, because although I did not think you loved me as I would be loved, I hoped in time you would; but strong men do not fall beneath the first blow. So if I may not have the best place in your heart I still may have a share in it, and in time I shall learn content."

So he spoke, and she fondly tried to believe that, like other men, he would forget, and choose some other woman to wife, some woman who would make him her hero and her idol; but in her heart of hearts she knew that Gabriel Dundas was not quite like other men.

Very few words passed between them during the remainder of their walk, and at the little gate they parted.

"Good-night," said Gabriel, "do not distress yourself because of me. Let me see a bright face to-morrow when I call."

"Good-bye," she answered, under her breath. "You are very good to me," and then she went slowly up the garden path, and he having watched until the door closed upon her, walked swiftly with bent head down the quiet road.

He could not go home yet, he must fight out his battle alone, and none but the man himself knew how bitter was the fight. With all the strength and force of his character, with all the accumulated passion of his thirty years, he loved Enid, and the soul within him rose in hot revolt against his cruel fate. Who was this man who stood between him and his desire? Was he worthy such a heart as Enid's? Could he hold her as dear as he (Gabriel) did or consecrate his life so utterly to her service?

Once he paused, and a groan broke from him as he realised how much he had lost—how all the beauty and brightness had gone from out his existence. It was cruelly hard, could he bear it as became a man? Could he meet her daily, and yet give no cause of offence by look or word of the love consuming him. Could he?

"I will!" he said, aloud. "I will! She shall never have to say I was false to the friendship she valued and relied upon."

He had finished the fight, the worst was past. He set his face towards home, and halted no more. Then, having dismissed the servants, he sat alone in the library buried in bitter thoughts. Here he had hoped that one day she would sit beside him whilst he waded through his mass of correspondence. He had often pictured himself looking up from those troublesome accounts, to see her dear face smiling back at him, and her eyes aglow with love.

For her sake he had made all things dainty and fair—and lo! she would have none of

them. He threw out his arms before him, and buried his face upon them.

"Ah, Heaven!" he groaned, "it is all over now for me—wife and children are not for me—half the vigour is gone from my life!"

And yet, when he rose the next morning, after a sleepless and terrible night, there was no sign upon him by which one might guess his misery. He was only a little graver, but not noticeably so; as usual he called at the cottage in passing, carrying a book for Enid and some dainty sweetmeats for the youngsters, and his manner was so free from all embarrassment that Enid could almost believe she had dreamed the events of the previous night.

And so in the days that followed he came and went, cheerful, kindly, full of plans for the happiness and welfare of others, until the girl grew to regard him with something akin to reverence (almost all women are born hero-worshippers) and his "hands" declared in nervous English that the master was a "durned sight better nor any o' them big guns who made the laws, there weren't one wot could come nigh him for goodness and brains."

Christmas was fast drawing near when Gabriel first began to notice a change in Enid. It was slight—very slight in the beginning, but the eyes of love are keen, and he could never be blind to any change in her. It seemed to him that her laugh grew less frequent, her step slower, that by-and-by the sweet mouth took a mournful curve, and that there were shadows lurking in the depths of her great grey eyes. But to him she was always the same kind ally, the ready sympathiser with all his plans, and yet—and yet he was troubled because of her.

One day, as he watched her leaving the room, his eyes showed a little too plainly what he saw, so that Mrs. Lovel was emboldened to say:

"You see it, too, Mr. Audley, the change in the child. She is anxious and troubled, although she thinks it disloyal to her lover to admit so much to me. He has been away nine months now, and—although I would not have believed it, if any person suggested to me before he went, that he could grow tired of my child, I am afraid I must believe it now."

At first his letters came very frequently, then perhaps once a week—of late not nearly so often; it is now nearly three weeks since Enid heard from him. She excuses him on the plea of lack of opportunity, says perhaps he is now in some isolated place where the postal arrangements are distinctly primitive, and that his letters may have miscarried—but I am afraid that in his case, at least, absence has not made the heart grow fonder, and I am troubled beyond measure for my child."

Wild hope rose in his heart that he might yet win Enid, but he crushed it down as unworthy, and said with all apparent calmness, though indeed his pulses were throbbing madly:

"You may wrong Miss Enid's lover! It is possible he may be ill and unable to write," then as the girl returned there was no further chance of speech between them. But all that day and for many days to come the burthen of her grief lay heavily upon Gabriel's spirit.

Christmas passed in quiet fashion, the Lovels and a few near neighbours dined at the Manor House, and later on helped Gabriel to entertain all the hands, and the poor of Penne-thorne. Then the festivities came to an end, and life went on in the same quiet way as before.

It struck Mrs. Lovel as ominous that neither letter nor little gift such as Maurice had been wont to send arrived on Christmas morning.

It made her heart ache to see the look of expectancy change to bitter disappointment in Enid's eyes, and more than all it hurt her to hear the forced laughter and affected merriment with which the girl sought to disguise her pain. But she was a wise woman, and made no comment upon Maurice Audley's con-

duct. She felt that was more than Enid in her present state could bear.

On the twenty-ninth of December the long-looked-for letter arrived, and Enid's heart throbbed with passionate delight when she saw the post-mark was "Clifton." So he was in England, he would find time to see her—and the happy tears rose to her eyes, as with trembling fingers she drew out her precious letter. But as she read the light faded from her face, all the new-born gladness was strangled in its birth. It was so brief, so brief! and, ah! dear Heaven, so cold, for this is what she read—

"My Dear Enid,—

"You will be surprised to see by this that we are in England. We returned on the twenty-third, but as our stay in London was so short, and the time of our departure so uncertain, I thought it best not to apprise you of my return, as it was quite impossible for me to run down to Penne-thorne. On the twenty-third we had a fairly enjoyable evening at the Athenæum—the play, a new one, being distinctly good."

"Christmas Day we spent in awful stater with Lord Heneage, coming down here on the twenty-sixth. If you answer this really bald epistle before the third address me here; if not, wait until you hear from me again, as my movements are now very uncertain. I expect we cross to Calais in a few days, and from thence go to Paris."

"With best wishes to Mrs. Lovel and the children, love to yourself, and hoping you have had a very jolly Christmas.—Always yours, "MAURICE."

Was that all? Not one word of love on which to feed her hungry heart; not one wish or hope expressed that they two soon might meet? Had he been so near to her, and yet could not seek her out? What did it mean? Was it possible, Maurice—the true, the noble, the idol of her girlish heart—no longer cared for her?

The letter dropped from her nerveless fingers to the floor, and she stood looking down upon it with despairing eyes.

She never heard the door opened, nor saw Gabriel until he came and touched her hand.

"You have had bad news," he said, gently.

She lifted her wild eyes to his face, clutched at her throat as though she were strangling. Then she feebly tried to smile.

"I am a coward," she said, with a pathetic quiver in her voice, "and imagine all sorts of calamities on the smallest foundations. Do not notice me. I—I—oh! what shall I do? What shall I do?" and then the white hands went up to shield the whiter face, and all her frail young body was shaken by her sobs.

What could he say? What could he do to comfort her? He, who loved her so well, though so hopelessly

"Heaven help you!" and as he spoke his hand rested a moment, protectingly, upon her shoulder. Then he did the wisest thing he could—he went out and left her alone, feeling solitude was best for her.

She groped for her letter, she read it again and again with burning eyes and set lips. Then she said, under her breath—

"It will kill me! It will kill me, but I will make no sign! I will die like the Spartan boy! But, oh, Maurice! Oh, Maurice! if you had but been sure of your heart how much happier for me!"

With all her gentleness, Enid Lovel was very proud, so her answer to Maurice conveyed no reproach, asked no explanation. She wrote naturally of this and that, chatted on local news, related how she had spent Christmas-tide, and gave no least hint of the grief gnawing at her heart.

She met Gabriel with perfect calmness, saying,—

"You will forget you ever saw me so childishly weak. I am not often so, and the unusual gaieties of the season had caused me to lose my balance. Now," with a faint smile,

sadder than all tears could be, "Richard's himself again."

But the days came and went, bringing with them fresh grief, added despair; hope deferred made sick her waiting heart, stole the bloom from her cheeks, the light from her eyes. And watching her in silence, gentle Mrs. Lovel almost cursed the day when Maurice Audley first met her darling.

"It will kill her!" she said to Gabriel. "She cannot bear suspense; better the dreadful certainty than this!"

"He is a villain!" Gabriel said, hotly. "He takes advantage of her defenceless condition. If I had him here but a moment!" and the pause he made was all too significant.

But it was curious that in all their conversations neither he nor Mrs. Lovel mentioned Maurice's name.

#### CHAPTER IV.

A large handsomely-furnished drawing-room on the outskirts of Clifton, from the windows of which one caught a magnificent view of Leigh Woods and Nightingale Valley. But Maurice Audley was not intent upon that view. All his attention was absorbed by a young lady (the only other occupant of the room) who half-reclined upon a couch, and looked up at him with arch eyes.

She was bewilderingly pretty, with corn-coloured hair and velvety-brown eyes. She had the sauciest little nose imaginable, a mouth like Cupid's bow, and a complexion so dazlingly fair that her enemies were wont (untruthfully) to assert that she owed it to art. For the rest she was slim and lissome, and the costliness of her dress and ornaments proved her to be a young lady of fortune.

"You are a disagreeable creature," she said, with an adorable pout. "You have not said a single pretty thing to me since you came in, and I stayed at home just to see you. You don't know what hard work it was to cajole Mrs. Routh to leave me here alone. She's an awful enthusiast over the proprieties—quite a prunes and prism kind of party."

She spoke with a slight—a very slight—American accent, and her voice was thin and reedy, like that of most American women. Her manner, too, was freer than that of a well-bred English girl; but even her little insolences were forgiven her on account of her exceeding prettiness.

"Do sit down. You look so gigantic standing there in this waning light. If you are very good, you may sit here," indicating a chair close by. "Now, why are you so gloomy?"

"Do you know that in two days we leave Clifton?" asked Maurice.

"Well?" drawled the girl, with slightly raised brows.

"It is not well, Lillias!" passionately, "for it means separation from you! We are going to Olanis first, then to Paris. Shall I ever see you again? Or is this to be our final goodbye?"

The soft colour came into the dainty face. "Which would you rather?" she asked, lifting liquid eyes to his that were so sombre.

"Need you ask?" he cried. "Oh! Lillias, need you ask? Of course it is madness for Maurice Audley, the poor secretary, to aspire to the wealthy Miss Flaxman's hand. I wish you had not a penny, that so you might see I love you for yourself alone."

"It's a deal nicer to be rich," the girl answered, demurely, "and I am quite pretty enough to be loved for my own sake. If I said I like you very, very much, and that it is not impossible that Mrs. Routh and I should be in Paris in the course of a few days?"

"Lillias! oh, my darling! oh, my darling! do you mean this?" and then she was in his arms, laughing in a happy, breathless way, and bidding him cease kissing her, whilst her eyes all the while invited his caresses.

"Be quiet," she said, after awhile, "I want to talk to you. How can I do so, when you stop my words? I don't want you to say

anything about our engagement until we are safe in Paris, because I am sure Daddy Routh, as my guardian, will object, and I'm not going to have my pleasure spoiled. He thinks I ought to marry 'a bloated aristocrat,' you know, but I guess I'll please myself, as I have always done. Oh! you don't know what a desperate character I am. You'll be sorry one day you ever asked me to—to marry you!"

"I never shall, and in nothing would I have you changed. One does not wish to have perfection spoiled!"

"Thank you, that is a very pretty speech. But Maurice, for my sake you will keep the secret until we join you over the water. It will only be for a few days at most."

"I would do more than that to please you, my darling!"

"You're a nice tractable boy. Now let me go. You have ruffled my hair shockingly, and it would be as well if I said good-bye before Mrs. Routh returns. I don't want to rouse her suspicions," and loth as he was to leave her, Maurice saw the wisdom of her advice. But as he went towards the chambers he shared with Ferries Heneage the thought of Enid struck him like a knife, and the shame of his inconstancy seemed too great a burthen to be borne.

How could he tell her the cruel truth? How could he say that all his love had gone from her. In fancy, he saw her sweet face grown pale, and her eyes dark with anguish.

"I am a scoundrel!" he said, between his clenched teeth, "but I cannot go back. Lillias is more to me than life. If any one had said that I—I of all men—should be so false to my given word, I would have resented such a speech with fiercest scorn. Enid, my poor girl! my poor girl! What will she say when at last she knows my desertion?"

The evening of his second betrothal was not a happy one, his conscience was a most uncompromising mentor, and would give him not the least rest.

"Enid!" it cried to him, through all the night watches. "Enid!" Again he saw her face, as he had last seen it, wet with tears, and heard her broken voice saying, "Heaven's grace go with you, dear!"

He was heartily glad when at last the morning dawned, and he could begin the necessary preparations for the journey to come. He did not write to Enid, he was not hypocrite enough for that, and he tried not to remember her; but in this he failed signally. No one could more despise him than he despised himself, and "scorn of self is bitter work," indeed to one so proud as he had always been of his integrity and truth.

There was a certain suppressed excitement about him too, which attracted even the attention of the Honourable Ferries.

"What the deuce is up with him" he thought. "I can't make him out; and he'd be certain to resent my questioning, he's so confoundedly close when he likes!"

In those last two days of their residence in Clifton, they saw a great deal of Miss Flaxman, and Ferries was not blind to the favour she showed his companion, and resented it.

The little American had touched what in him did duty for a heart, and he only lacked the courage to propose. There had been a time when Lillias had set herself to win him, only Maurice had superior personal attractions, and she liked his masterful ways, his open and fervent admiration, whilst she almost despised the young lordling, with his vacuous stare and halting speech.

The journey to Paris was without event, and the two young men had been settled there a week before Maurice received a note from Lillias, saying they were staying at the Hotel Bristol, and would he call upon her without delay.

"I have confessed all to Daddy Routh," she wrote, "and we had just a wee bit of a scene, but I suppressed him promptly. He

asked what were your prospects, and I referred him to you; telling him I should marry whom I pleased (which, indeed, I will), so come at once. You won't find my estimable guardian very formidable, and you shall have an interview with me first, to sustain you through your ordeal. Au revoir!"

Of course, Maurice went, and found Lillias prettier and more charming than ever. He was very desperately in love with her then. Afterwards he was interviewed by Mr. Routh, who plainly said he had no least control over his wayward ward, and so long as she married a gentleman of good character, he had resolved to allow her to take her own way.

"She needs a strong hand to govern her!" he said, in conclusion. "I am utterly unfit for my position!"

So the engagement was ratified, but Mr. Routh at once made inquiries as to Maurice Audley's antecedents. He owed at least as much to his ward. He had heard the young man speak of Pennethorne, and Lillias had a cousin residing there, to him he would apply for information—that cousin was Gabriel Dundas. And on receipt of the letter the master of the mills went to Mrs. Lovel with whom Enid was then sitting.

"I cannot tell," he began, "if ever I have spoken to you of a young cousin—an American on the paternal side—and a great heiress. If not, I may as well tell you she is very wealthy, very pretty, and extremely flippant. She is now in Paris, and this morning I got a letter from her guardian, telling me she has seen fit to promise herself in marriage to a penniless Englishman, and, naturally, Mr. Routh is anxious to discover if the story he gives of his past is true. It appears he hails from Pennethorne, and I thought you could perhaps help me to satisfy him on certain points. Do you remember Maurice Audley, Mrs. Lovel?"

"Maurice Audley! Did you say Maurice Audley?" gasped Enid, hoarsely.

She had risen, and was looking at him with burning eyes. Her face was wild and white, her arms had dropped slackly to her sides, but the slim hands hidden in the folds of her gown were so cruelly clenched that the nails pierced the tender flesh.

In one moment of keenest pain and pity Gabriel grasped the whole truth.

"I did not guess," he began, when she interrupted him in a laboured voice:

"No, you did not guess how cruelly you would strike upon my heart. But it is better I should know the truth—Oh! yes, it must be better. He is not the first man to break faith with the woman who loved him. And she, you say, is pretty! If he had asked his release I could have borne it better—but but he could not bring himself to do that. Mr. Dundas, I have no further claim upon him. He is free to marry your cousin."

Her glittering eyes never waived in their regard, and her voice did not tremble, only her bosom rose and fell with the awful pain tearing at her heart.

"Enid," the man said, shaken by love and sorrow for her, "should I be acting honestly in allowing my cousin to marry such a consummate villain?"

"He is not that," she answered, in the same level tones. "Ask all the good people of Pennethorne. He is a scholar and a gentleman, and for the rest he is only like other men—only—I used not once to think so. Do not say anything to prejudice your cousin's guardian against him. I ask so much for my own sake!"

"If I obey you it is utterly against my wish."

"But you will obey. And now, I beg you crown all your favours by leaving me—I am best alone. I beg your pardon that I so startled you—the blow was unexpected. But I shall not suffer long. The young, they say, soon forget."

A pathetic smile curved her lips, then as she offered him her little hand:

"Heaven help you!" he said, and dared



trust himself to speak no more, but with a heavy heart took his leave.

Then the mother, who was crying quietly, drew near to her child.

"Oh, my darling! oh, my darling! that this evil thing should come to you! He might have spared you. Oh! I hope he will suffer a thousandfold more than he has made you suffer! Enid, say something! Do not take this in such a dreadfully quiet way," and she laid her arms about the girl's neck.

But Enid put her gently away.

"Don't touch me, mamma. I cannot bear kindness yet. I want to be strong. I want to think," and she began to pace restlessly to and fro; but no tears quenched the brightness of her eyes or stained the white, drawn face. "Perhaps," she said, dreamily, "perhaps I shall understand it better soon—and then tears will come to help me. But now all is so vague—I cannot realise that all my life is wrecked at its very outset. Ah! you are crying for me who have no tears to shed for my own bitter grief. Poor mamma! Do not take it so much to heart. Remember, you will have your daughter with you always now!"

And then she passed the weeping woman by, and went up with slow steps to her own room.

It was a bitterly cold day in January, and the snow lay deep upon the ground; but Enid, unconscious of bodily discomfort, flung wide her window, and kneeling by it, looked out over the white, dreary world with wide, unseeing eyes.

It was all ended now—all the love and the joy of a lifetime. There was no longer any hope of good to come. She should never see him again, and in the pleasant ways they used to tread together they might never more be seen.

Words of a poem Maurice had long ago read to her came back to waken her heart to keener and crueler torture.

Could two days live again of that dead year,  
One would say seeking us and passing here,  
"Where is she?" and one answering, "Where is he?"  
Could'st thou not watch with me?

Nay those two lovers are not anywhere;  
If we were they none know us what we were,  
Nor ought of all our barren grief or gloe,  
Could'st thou not watch with me?

A sob broke from the pale lips, but no tears came; her brain was on fire, and wild thoughts dwelt with her.

"Oh!" she said, "if I could die now! Does grief ever kill?" and again, "Maurice, my darling! my darling! I would to Heaven we had never met!" and yet in all, through all, she harboured no anger, and no resentment against him. She had loved him all too well for that. The heavy hours wore by, and Mrs. Lovel, with the wisdom born of mother-love, did not go near her child. She would fight out her battle best alone, and though Enid was so uniformly gentle, she was also brave and proud, and would learn to hide her sorrow from those who made her little world.

The short afternoon closed in before Mrs. Lovel ventured into the little room, and then she did not by word or look refer to Enid's sorrow.

"Dear child," she said, "you are cold and you must be faint. I have brought you an egg and some coffee, and if you would rather stay up here I will build you a fire."

Enid drank the coffee, but refused to eat. In a listless fashion she watched her mother close the window, and kindle a blaze in the little grate. In the same way she submitted to her caressing, saying only, "You are very good to me, dear!" and then once more she was alone.

She never could tell how she passed the long hours of that awful night when she lay unvisited of sleep, pondering over that happy, happy past which already seemed so distant, and wondering how she would learn to mask her sorrow in the days to come.

In the morning she went downstairs and about her household duties, refusing to neglect one of them, but it almost broke her mother's heart to see the change in her. She was so white, so still, so apathetic—her whole manner

was so unnatural—if only she would break down! if only she would not fence herself about with this strange calmness!

And so she went about for days. She had written a short note to Maurice with a steady hand and quiet face. It stung him to keenest remorse, only this she did not know.

"I send you back your ring," she wrote, "and with it all the promises you made when love was with us, and life was glad. I have no longer any claim upon your heart or thoughts. I can only hope you may be very happy in the future, and that all your dreams of greatness may be realised! I pray, as once I prayed before, that Heaven's grace may be with you always."

"ENID LOVEL."

That was all, not one word of anger or reproach, nor a hint of all he had made her suffer, what wonder that Maurice Audley loathed himself as he read, and cursed his own inconstancy.

"I wish I could see her utterly weak. I wish she would break down if never so badly!" said the anxious mother to Gabriel. "She will be prostrated by her grief if she will not give vent to it. When I look at her I can only think these words, 'She must weep or she will die,' and I cannot, I will not lose her," rebelliously. "Never had woman so dear and good a child!"

It chanced one day, Mrs. Lovel noiselessly entered the girl's room, to find her seated in a low chair with a packet of letters in her hand. It was the first time she had ventured to look at them since Maurice had been proved false; and, as she read, the hard light died out of her eyes, a spasm of agony contracted all her features, and her lips quivered ominously.

"My darling heart," she read, "no chance or change can dim the perfection of our love! You are to me what Heaven is to the good—losing you, I should lose all that makes life worth living;" and then, all suddenly, she threw out her arms, crying, "I cannot bear it! Maurice, Maurice, you break my heart!"

In an instant Mrs. Lovel was kneeling beside her, her arms about the slender waist, and drawing the dark head down upon her breast she whispered, brokenly:

"Here, my darling! Here on your mother's heart sob out all your sorrow. Tears will give you ease, ah, child! ah, child! All too soon you have come into woman's certain heritage of pain."

And there was halm in the passionate weeping; although ashamed of her ungoverned emotion when Enid appeared at table later on, she was more like to the old sympathetic, cheerful Enid than she had been for long days.

#### CHAPTER V.

In the early spring Mrs. Lovel fell ill. She had never been strong, and a severe cold developed into bronchitis and pleurisy. It was a terribly anxious time for Enid, and she half forgot her ever present grief in her fears for her mother.

Gabriel came and went, bringing new life and hope with him, and at the very worst he took the twins away to the Manor House, so that perfect quiet was ensured.

The doctor spoke hopefully of the case, but as day followed day, and there was no visible improvement in the patient, Enid insisted upon securing further advice.

"She is so weak," she said, in a quivering voice to Gabriel. "All the acute pain has gone, and she complains only of a dreadful lassitude and faintness. There are times when she lies so long unconscious I feel I must shriek aloud because I fear she is—dead!"

"I'll send for Silote. He's an authority on such cases. Oh, don't say one word of thanks, or you will drive me away, and I really wish to see Mrs. Lovel if you will let me."

"Mamma is always glad to see you, and I, oh, I don't know what I should have done without you through all this dreadful time!"

"Thank you," he said, gravely, "it is good to feel I am of service to you!"

The great Doctor Silote came the next day, and made a careful examination of the patient, and Enid's heart grew sick with dread when she saw his grave expression.

She followed him downstairs into the breakfast-room, where Gabriel was waiting to hear the verdict.

"My dear young lady," said the doctor, laying his hand on her shoulder in a fatherly fashion, "you will need all your courage. It would be cruel to buoy you with false hopes. Pleurisy has given way, as it too often does, to rapid decline. You must prepare for the worst!"

"Oh!"

It was a long-drawn, shuddering sigh, and just a moment her hands went up to hide the anguish in her eyes, just a moment both men thought she would faint. Then she recovered herself by an almost superhuman effort.

"Thank you for your candour," she said, piteously. "I am not ungrateful, but I wish you could have left me hope," and then, when once more she and Gabriel were alone, she broke down suddenly. "Oh, my mother! my mother! help me to bear this, friend. I am grown so weak!"

He longed to take her in his arms and comfort her, but that might not be, and before he could frame any consoling speech she had recovered her self-control.

"You will excuse me now. I cannot bear to spend one moment from her, knowing all the truth. Yes, you may come later on. I find my strength in you!" with grave simplicity.

Mrs. Lovel opened her eyes as her daughter entered the room.

"Dear child," she said, "you need not tell me Dr. Silote's verdict. I have known from the first how my illness would end. There, child, do not weep so bitterly. You must try to listen to me and understand my instructions. I would like, if possible, that Will should come home before the end. I cannot go in peace without wishing my boy good-bye, and after all is over—Enid! Enid! my darling, be strong now, for mother's sake!" as the girl broke into a sharp cry of anguish.

"I will," she said, under her breath. "Go on, dear mother, I will not grieve you again," and she passionately kissed the cold, thin hand which lay upon the coverlet.

"When all is over I would like you to stay on here. There will be enough to keep you all in comfort. Let Dot and Terry have the best education you can afford. They were getting beyond me in their lessons; and, come nearer yet, darling, should there ever be a time when your heart will turn to Gabriel, remember that a mother's blessing rested upon your union!"

In May Mrs. Lovel died, and Enid found herself left with the care of two children upon her, but Gabriel relieved her of any labour connected with those last sad offices to the dead. In those first days of her bereavement she learned to lean upon him, and to go to him for advice in any difficult matter, being sure he never would fail her.

Will returned home in time to receive his mother's blessing, but he was compelled to join his ship two days after the funeral took place, and life at Leafdale Cottage went on quietly enough.

Only at every turn Enid missed that dear presence. There were times when in her passionate longing for her mother she would grow sick and giddy, would stretch out yearning arms to the empty air, as though she sought to call her back into her loving embrace.

There were times, at first, when she would turn startled and trembling thinking she heard that beloved voice, and then she would sink shudderingly upon her knees crying out wildly to the cruel grave to give back the treasure it enfolded.

In time the little ones forgot to grieve, as children will, and seemed well content with

life even though "mother had gone away," but with Enid it was otherwise, and those who loved her best saw with concern how pale and frail she had grown, how very rarely now she smiled.

"You are wearing to a shadow!" said Gabriel. "You let the children trouble you too much. Will it rest you if I have them up to the House for a few days?"

"Oh, I could not part with them. I should miss them so sorely; and, indeed, I am very well. But as you are so needlessly anxious about me I promise as soon as the quarter closes to go to some quiet seaside place. It will be good for the children—but not even for them can I neglect my pupils!"

"Enid, won't you let me care for you and them too?"

"Hush!" she said, uncertainly. "I am not the Enid you used to love. I have gone through so much since then."

"But I love you the same—oh, no, dear heart!—not the same, but infinitely more. Will not you promise at least to try to think of me as I would have you do?"

"I dare promise nothing," a little wildly, "I will not bind myself by any vow. Oh, say no more now. Remember my recent sorrow, and be merciful to me!"

"It is yours to command and mine to obey," sadly. "I will not speak of love again, until by word or deed you have given me ground for hope."

And that, thought Enid, would never be.

In July she took her babies, as she called them, to a little seaside village, where living was cheap, and the scenery pretty; and there the faint colour stole back into her wan cheeks, and fresh strength and vigour came to her even if joy was not. The simple, healthy outdoor life was good for her, and the twins allowed her small space for brooding, so that on her return to Pennethorne there was a marked improvement in her appearance.

August passed, the harvest was gathered in. September, with its promise of berries and nuts, lured the children into the woods and through the bare fields.

"Oh, dear," sighed Enid, as she leaned upon the garden gate, "winter will soon be upon us again, and how I dread its advent. How late those children are! Jane should not take them so far from home," and she listened anxiously for the sound of the small, lagging feet. "They are sure to come home cruelly tired."

But all was silent. It was growing dusk now, and she felt a little nervous, so that when a man's quick tread was heard she turned to enter the house, when a voice—hoarse and eager—cried her name aloud:

"Enid!"

Her heart seemed to stand still a moment, then it beat so fast and furiously she thought it would suffocate her, for there in the road was Maurice. His face was passion pale, there was a madness of despair in his deep-set eyes, and he was worn with travel.

As she looked on him all her soul was flooded with a deep, intense compassion; but the scales fell from her eyes, and with almost a guilty feeling she knew that although her heart would be always tender towards him, although her hand would be always ready to help him, she loved him no longer as she used to do. That in the months of sadness and solitude she had trampled out the last spark of her ill-starred passion. She put out her hand to him.

"You have come back," she said, simply, "and you are in trouble, Maurice? Can I help you?"

"No one can do that," he said, bitterly, "and yet I thought it would comfort me only to see you. Look at me well, Enid. Your triumph is complete. The cup I gave you to drink has been offered me. I have sipped the very dregs of humiliation and despair. Won't you rejoice over my calamity? I deserve it, you know!"

"Why should I rejoice?" simply. "Maurice, you do not think so badly of me as that, or

you would not be here now; and I know you never meant to wound me. It is over now, dear, all the smart and the sorrow—and we may be friends still!"

"Enid, I think you are an angel!" he said, humbly.

"No, only the woman who loved you once, and hopes always to be your friend. Come in now, and tell me your trouble. It may be together we shall find a way out of it!"

"That can never be," gloomily. "She is already a wife." Then, as he followed her into the once familiar room he asked, "Your mother, Enid—she will not accord me a welcome?"

"My mother is dead!" she answered, in a low voice. "I cannot bear to speak of my loss yet. Tell me of Miss Flaxman."

"She is now the Honourable Mrs. Heneage. I never guessed he cared for her, and I believed in her as one believes in Heaven. I was very happy in those early days of our betrothal, because I willfully blinded myself to her faults and frivolities. But I grew angry when Heneage haunted us, when he danced attendance upon her at every possible occasion. She only laughed and openly coquetted with him before me, but I never suspected evil or treachery."

"I bore with her caprices patiently. Heaven knows I did! She was so young, and had been so flattered and spoiled; there was true gold beneath all the dross, and when once she was my wife, she would be more amenable to reason. That was how I argued with myself. Three weeks ago we were at Versailles, when I received a letter from an old college friend, begging me to go to him at Brighton; he was alone there and dying. I lost no time in obeying the summons, and in the days immediately following was too engrossed with my care of him to take much heed of the brevity of Miss Flaxman's letters, and she had often declared she was the worst of correspondents."

"My friend died, and, of course, I waited for the funeral. After that I learned from his will that he had left me all his little property (for, like myself, he was a lonely man), and I found myself possessed of an income of two hundred pounds per annum. Despite my natural grief at his loss, I could not but rejoice in my good fortune, seeing it would give me my wife earlier than I had dared to hope. I hurried back to Versailles, but I found there only Mr. and Mrs. Routh. Lillias, they said, was gone. She had married Ferries Heneage the previous day, with their full sanction and approval. The match was in every way a suitable one."

"They refused to tell me to what place the happy pair had gone. I was like one mad, and I suppose they feared I might take summary vengeance upon them. I returned to England, and had an interview with Lord Heneage, who acquitted me of all blame in the matter, and promised to assist me in the future. Then, hardly knowing why, and amazed at my own audacity, I came on here. I felt I must see you, and, for the first time in my life, I had lost all self-control. I was like a ship driven before the wind."

"Oh! Enid, I know now what I have lost, all the good my life might have held, all the bitter seed I have sown, which has yielded such a black harvest, and yet I dare ask you to pity me, for I am broken down, and all my strength has gone from me."

"It will return," she said, ever so gently.

"You were never weak. Take courage, Maurice, there are better days in store for you," and with those words she gave her hands into his keeping. "A woman who could so basely betray a trust is not worth a tear or a regret—in time you will think so. And for the rest be assured that my friendship is yours now and for ever. Ah, Maurice! we had need be lenient to the faults of others, when we remember our own," but neither her tone nor her look conveyed any reproach.

Enid was above malice.

As he lifted his haggard eyes to hers, and saw the sweetness of the pale, tender face,

Maurice Audley cursed the folly which had made him false to her, and longed with all his strength for the return of those dear, dead days, when, because of her, life had seemed so fair.

A rush of feet outside, then a noisy entrance, proclaimed the return of the twins. Teddy stared at the visitor with open eyes, then he said—

"Why, it's Maurice! Oh! haven't you been ill? You look as old—as old as Methusalem!" and he began to shake hands warmly.

But Dot, who had picked up scraps of information concerning his treatment of Enid, shrugged her shoulders, and looking, scowlingly, at him, remarked—

"What have you come back here for? Jane says you behaved like a brute to Sissie!"

"Dot!" cried Enid, "Jane should not say such foolish things, and you must not repeat them. Won't you speak nicely to Maurice, he is very unhappy and ill!"

"Then I am very glad!" announced the young lady, stoutly, as with head erect she went from the room.

"The child is right," said Maurice, heavily. "Let it pass!"

All Pennethorne was astounded when he found Mr. Audley had returned, and intended residing in its midst at least for a time, and Gabriel would have been more than human had he felt pleasure at the turn events had taken.

What more likely than Maurice should return to his old allegiance and win again the heart he had not cared to keep?

Enid's manner, too, bewildered him. She was so gentle and kindly towards Maurice, whilst daily her manner towards himself became more constrained, and he was not sufficiently versed in the intricacies of woman's nature to find hope in her reserve.

His visits to Leafdale Cottage grew less frequent, and it was noticed by some that the master was not so ready to smile as before. Then as the weeks went by, gossip said Maurice Audley haunted his old love's steps, that he was weary of his folly, and only longed now to make her what reparation he could. They speculated about her conduct with regard to him.

"Would she marry him or no?" But no one dared to speak of these things to her, and she went her way in sublime unconsciousness of the conundrums propounded.

## CHAPTER VI.

Winter came again, and still Maurice lingered at Pennethorne, and did not seem to find it dull. As if to prove the truth of the saying, "unto him that hath more shall be given," he received so many applications for stories and articles, that he was compelled to refuse several. Already he was becoming known, and the papers spoke more than favourably of him.

He talked sometimes of going to town, but, as yet, he had made no attempt to move, and he was almost ashamed to own even to himself, that his heart had gone back to Enid, and the thought of leaving her, was cruel as death.

Yes, it had come to that! His brief infatuation was over, and his better self cried out only for this girl with the sweet, pale face, and winsome ways.

If only she could forget! If only she would forgive! He rarely thought now of Lillias. Ferries had been pardoned his hasty marriage, and Lord Heneage had been won over to his side by the bride's prettiness and coaxing ways. She was rapidly becoming a society leader. So much he knew, but he asked no more—she had no longer any power to hurt him. He wondered that ever he could have loved so slight a thing.

Dot was ready to complain of Gabriel's "neglect," as she was pleased to call it, and cherishing malice in an unchristian-like fashion, said:

"I don't want Maurice. He isn't half so nice as Mr. Dundas. Why have you sent him



away, Enid? Why are you so kind to that horrid Audley man?"

"Mr. Audley is very unhappy and friendless!"

"I don't care, I am glad rather. Oh, I do wish he would go away, and our jolly times come back. Mr. Dundas is awful fun you know, and Maurice only sits and thinks and thinks as hard as ever he can, and he don't ever seem to remember Teddy and I, but just looks at us as if we were funny Japanese dolls. Do send him away, Enid dear, and I'll promise to be good a whole week!"

"When you are older, you will think more kindly of Maurice, and I do not like to see you forgetful of old friends, dear!"

"He isn't a friend!" Dot broke out tempestuously. "I hate him, and when I'm quite grown up, and may do just as I like, I'll never speak to him any more. Teddy's only a boy, so he don't care, and don't understand things; but I do, and I mean to keep my word," with which the precocious young lady rushed headlong from the room, and from that day neither Enid's entreaties nor commands would induce her to be civil to Maurice. But always in his presence, she chanted Gabriel's praises, and lamented his absence.

With the advent of a new year, Enid, remembering her mother's wishes, despatched the twins to school, much against their wills. It must be confessed that Dot showed at her very worst, when the subject was broached to her, and it needed all Gabriel's reasonings and coaxings to reduce her to a proper frame of mind. He was the little maid's hero, and there was something in her innocent devotion that was at once pathetic and amusing.

The house was very quiet when the children were gone, but the friends Enid's kindness had won her would not allow her to feel dull. Visitors were plentiful at Leasdale Cottage, and first one and then the other would carry her off to their homes, for all loved the gentle little music teacher.

As the weeks wore by the change in Maurice's manner towards her caused her much uneasiness. She could no longer doubt that his old love had waked again to life, and that he only waited an opportunity to declare it.

She felt she was guilty of a species of inconstancy, that she now shrank from the idea of becoming his wife. He was dear to her as a friend, but she could regard him in no other light.

Her feelings towards Gabriel she did not try to analyze. She only knew that she sorely missed his once frequent visits, and that it seemed less easy to stand alone now than it used to do. She was conscious, too, of a vague unrest ever increasing, and a certain impatience of Maurice Audley's pronounced devotion.

It was rarely now she took part in any of the entertainments the "master" delighted to give. She thought sadly,—

"I am no longer any use to him. He has no need of my services," and the sense of solitude grew greater upon her.

Once he spoke to her, as she came from church.

"Miss Enid, I am afraid you are missing the little ones. You grow so pale and quiet!"

"I seem to be missing all those things I used to prize!" she said, sadly. "Nothing will ever be the same again to me!" and then Maurice joined them, and there was no further chance of speech.

She tried to comfort herself with the thought that Gabriel's voice had been very kind, although his words had seemed cold, but her hungry heart cried out for more than kindness; and that night she fell asleep with tears upon her cheeks. But even to herself she would not acknowledge the cause of her sorrow and new strange restlessness that possessed her so entirely.

And Maurice—well, man-like, he mistook her friendship for a warmer feeling. It was impossible Enid should change, and one day, soon, he could ask her to be his wife, and sheltered by his love, surrounded by tender

observances, she would forget his sin in the past, and remember only to be happy.

On a dull February night as she sat alone, Enid heard the rush of many feet by the house, the shouts of men, and the shrill voices of women, and wondering a little over the cause of such unusual commotion, turned again to her book in the hope of finishing it.

But she was doomed to interruption. The door was suddenly and unceremoniously opened, and Jane, her cap awry, her face flushed with excitement, rushed in.

"Oh! Miss Enid, the mills are afire. The master's down there, and they've sent for the firemen. There's a power of 'hands' gone by, and they say the place can't be saved!"

Long before she had finished Enid had started to her feet. Gabriel was there in the burning buildings, then how could she rest here?

It only needed this to teach her the truth in all its fulness, she loved him, and he was in danger.

"Put on your bonnet and shawl and come with me. I cannot remain at home!" and Jane, who had secretly wished to make one of the spectators, hurried to obey.

With trembling fingers Enid dressed herself, and then they went out into the night. The sky all around was lurid, the flames leapt up it seemed to the very clouds, and sparks flew in every direction.

All Pennethorne had turned out to see the fire, and Gabriel being so popular, had many volunteer assistants.

Enid and Jane hurried down the road in the direction of the mills, passing many they knew, but Enid spoke to none. She had but one thought, and that was to find Gabriel, to assure herself of his safety, and implore him to come away from that dreadful spot.

In her fear and anxiety she almost ran, and Jane was breathless with the effort to keep pace with her.

She was relieved when suddenly Maurice joined them, and she could fall in the rear.

"Enid," the young man said, "let me take you home. The crowd will be frightful, and the wind is blowing sparks and fragments of burning wood in all directions. My dear, you must not go on," and he laid his hand with gentle authority upon her arm. But she shook it off impatiently.

"It is as safe for me as for you," she said, "and I could not rest at home. Do not try to stay me," and he, seeing she was resolved, said no more, but drawing her hand within his arm, hurried on beside her.

"He is there?" she asked presently. "Mr. Dundas, I mean."

"Yes, and doing the work of two men. He seems not to know what fear is, for wherever the greatest danger lies, there is he. I heard his foreman remonstrating with him, but he only said, 'It is my duty, and if harm comes to me I have no one to regret my loss!'"

"No one to regret his loss!" The words stabbed Enid to the heart. Oh, if she could but see him for a moment, and bid him for her sake, not to hazard the life she held so dear.

She could not speak, she could hardly breathe; but Maurice did not notice her agitation, the excitement of the scene engrossed him; for now they stood before the burning mills, and above all the hissing and roaring of the flames, the crackling of wood, the falling of water, they heard Gabriel's voice commanding and encouraging.

Once or twice his magnificent figure stood out darkly against the lurid sky; and then Enid caught her breath, whilst with fast clasped hands she prayed in her soul that Heaven would keep him safe.

Thanks to the exertions of the gallant brigade and the ready help afforded by the "hands," the fire was now being brought under; but considerable damage was done. The north side of the mills was a total ruin, and the east had suffered so severely that it was unsafe to linger there.

Gabriel's voice was heard warning the men away, and with one exception they obeyed, a young and venturesome lad still lingered behind, and a sick shudder ran through the crowd, as with a crash some beams and a portion of a wall fell suddenly, burying him beneath.

The fire was smouldering yet, and it was small shame to those around that they hesitated to enter. Most of them had wives and children depending for bread upon them. As Gabriel said he had none, and so it was Gabriel who went to the rescue.

A cry broke from Enid, a cry which, in its anguish, struck coldly upon Maurice's heart. He turned to look at her, but her face was hidden in her hands.

"Oh!" she said, under her breath, "could no other be found? Heaven have mercy upon him and me."

Not a word did Maurice say, but his face was white and rigid, and in his eyes there was a look of dark despair.

Had he all along deceived himself? After all, was it Gabriel she loved? If so, who was he that he should seek to come between?

He strained his eyes to catch a glimpse of his rival's returning figure, whilst a great hush possessed the waiting crowd.

Then, all in an instant, one mighty shout rose and seemed to rend the very heavens, for there, scorched and begrimed, but all unhurt, stood Gabriel, the young lad in his arms. The mother rushed forward.

"He is only stunned," panted the master; "get him home as quickly as you can. Here, lads, lend a hand." Then later, as the lad was conveyed away, "Friends, let me pass. I am spent. To-morrow I shall know how to thank you better for your generous help," and as the crowd divided he passed rapidly through the midst.

"Enid!" said Maurice, hoarsely, "look up, he is coming!"

She lifted her head then. She was very white, but her eyes held a deep joy, although they were not guileless of tears, and like one in a happy dream she saw Gabriel approaching. He had stripped off coat and vest, and presented a sorry appearance, with his smoke-darkened face, singed hair and beard; but he was quite unhurt. Oh, thank Heaven, thank Heaven, quite unhurt! Seeing her, he started.

"Miss Enid, you here!" he exclaimed, and she answered, faintly:

"I could not remain at home, knowing you were in such peril. Mr. Dundas, I want to tell you how glad and grateful I am that you are given back to us again!" and then, to his dismay, she burst into a passionate flood of tears, and all her lithe young form was shaken by her sobs.

"Go!" said Maurice, quickly. "To-night she is unstrung and nervous, and you must need rest. To-morrow you can see her; but now let me take her home," and with his brain in a whirl Gabriel suffered her to pass, saying only—

"Good-night, and thank you for your sympathy."

Then he went home, walking like one in a happy dream. What did her agitation mean if not that she loved him? And had not Maurice Audley's haggard face told him the same story? Fatigue and loss alike were both forgotten. What was all the world to him compared with the love of Enid?

Trembling so violently in every limb that Maurice compelled her to lean her whole little weight upon him, Miss Lovel went homewards. At the gate, where once they had parted in anguish and tears—years and years ago it seemed to the man—they halted.

"Good-night!" said the girl, in a low voice. "You have been very kind to me."

"Do not go yet," he answered, quickly. "I have something to say to you which must be said to-night!"

She began to tremble, being all unnerved, so, without any preface, Maurice broke into his subject.

"Until an hour ago, Enid, I was vain and presumptuous enough to hope and believe you loved me still, and I was waiting only the opportunity to plead my cause with you. But your face, as you raised it to his, your tears and agitation, have opened my eyes to the truth! Dear, there is no longer any hope for me!"

She shook her head.

"Forgive me, Maurice, there is none!"

"I have no right to question you further!" he said, in hoarse and laboured tones, "but is it true that you love him, as I know he has long loved you? Tell me that. I am strong enough to bear the punishment I deserve."

She looked fearlessly at him. "I can do nothing less than love him."

"Thank you for your candour, Enid. I shall go away. I have long intended doing so, but love of you has kept me here. You will perhaps write me occasionally—you will not deny me your friendship?"

"That is yours always."

"Heaven bless you, dear! Will you kiss me once in farewell?"

She lifted her sweet face to his, a little sob caught her breath (for she had loved him once, and she could not help but pity him), and kissed him in token of farewell, and then, without a word, they parted.

In the early morning came Gabriel, and, all unable to meet his eyes, Enid rose, blushing and confused, and, offering her hand, said in a queer, uncertain voice—

"You have quickly recovered from your fatigue, Mr. Dundas."

Mr. Dundas took the little hand and held it. There was a gleam of fun in the blue eyes, an amused smile about the firm mouth.

"Why don't you look at me, Enid? Was my appearance last night so very shocking you do not care to risk a repetition of your fright?" and then, as the hot colour flamed into her cheeks, his eyes grew earnest and tender, and the face bent upon her was instinct with love.

"Darling!" he said, "darling! I would lose all I possess in the world if only to learn what last night I hope and believe I learned. Is it true, Enid, that you have found me just the least bit necessary to your happiness? Let me see your eyes, sweetheart; in them I shall find my answer."

She looked up then, laughing a little, crying a little—weak as a child in her great gladness.

"I love you," she said. "Oh, Gabriel, how I love you!"

He lifted the lithe, small form in his strong arms, he laid his mouth to her's in the first long, satisfied kiss of love, and the joy of that moment held them in happy silence.

For them all the glory and brightness of perfect love and perfect trust; for them the sweetness of home, the fulness of content, the love of childish hearts! There were many who would rise up and call them blessed, many who could testify to the "master's" goodness, and his gentle lady's charity.

For Maurice, what remained? Fame, and afterwards great wealth; but he has learned too late, too late! that neither riches nor honour can satisfy a man's soul, and how esteems above all good gifts the heart he hung so carelessly by.

[THE END.]

#### HAPPINESS—A RECIPE.

To make it: Take a hall, dim lit;  
A pair of stairs where two may sit;  
Of music soft a bar or so,  
Two spoons of—just two spoons, you know;  
Of little love pats, one or two,  
Or one squeezed hand instead will do;  
A waist—the size to be embraced;  
And two ripe lips, rose red—to taste;  
And if the lips are soft and sweet,  
You'll find your happiness complete.

## Born to Make Money

By UNCLE BENJAMIN.

"It is a gift. Nature bestows it on some and denies it to others," remarked a street-door philosopher, the other night, as we were talking of a rich neighbour's luck.

"That's so," echoed another. "In school, as a boy, our neighbour over there was always in luck, and always got the best of the bargain. He was not very studious in books. But he seemed to be studying all the while how to make a trade. Now that I recall that chap's brown studies, I think that's the entire secret. The fellow's cast of thought always was in comparative values. He would ask: 'Which kind of knife do you think is best?' 'Would you rather be a good swimmer or a good skater?' and other similar questions of comparison."

If you will examine closely, you will observe that a keen and successful trader, when alone, evidently runs to comparing things mentally. He is forever comparing the growth of towns, the cost of this house and that, the value of one horse with another. In his talk he shows this; comparisons abound. He puts comparisons into figures. He will whip out an envelope and figure, "Now, here's what that sold for last year. This is what it is this year." While other men, looking at a dwelling, would simply take in its beauty or defects, he, the born money-maker, is thinking, "Would I prefer this to my place? If yes, how much, and why? If not, why not, and how much of the why not?"

The born money-maker thinks of everything as moving up or down a scale of values. He always has a starting point, and then a jack-knife or a piece of land is "off" or "on" so many points from that. His mind works unconsciously just like one of those thermic measures which indicate the maximum degree of temperature by a halting bead of red. Tell him the highest or lowest price of a lot or a stock, he never forgets it; it sticks in his mind like a burr in a sheep's wool. He remembers prices as naturally as some men remember faces, and others remember localities. There is no accounting for this except, as I say, by confessing that it is born in a man. Why can one man always tell which way is north, and another, when out of his own street, is always turned round? Why can one man remember a tune and whistle it on once hearing it, and another can scarce pound it into himself? These are gifts of nature. And the money-maker's ability to cling to prices and quote fluctuations is the same singular, natural endowment. Other men may acquire a partial facility by study; but no man can compete with your born money-maker.

Your money-maker sees one thing—money. Almost always he is deficient in every other respect. His affections are small; not that he means to be cold-hearted, but that he is simply not born to love or be loved. He is not intentionally cruel, but he does not feel other men's woes; mercy is not one of his attributes, any more than a fiddle-bow is in a plumber's bag. He is not fond of amusement; nothing amuses him so much as making money. He does not generally joke much. If he tells a good story, it is only that he may put you in good humour for a trade and throw you off your guard. You feel, while you are laughing, that it is dangerous, and you look up quickly, to see his cold eyes pausing on you with a shrewd gleam, like sunbeams from ice. He is no great eater, and rarely a drunkard, though he may treat the crowd often enough. He belongs to few things; maybe, as a boy, he joined some fraternity because he thought it might help him to some advantage; but he soon tires of the club-room, and especially of the continual calls of sweet charity. If he goes to church, he means to make it pay; not that he really is mercenary in his religion, but that he cannot help

making the church pay. Everything pays with him, for he was made that way.

Your born money-maker forgets his love of flowers and books, pictures and horses. These natural functions, if he had them, wither and die because he gives them little and less exercise. When he has become very rich, probably he builds a fine residence. But it is his wife and daughter who arrange the grounds by the aid of a landscape gardener. His family have their own way about the structure, by the help of an architect; on the internal fittings, by the wisdom of the most expensive decorator. The money king, poor soul, does not find time or pleasure in such use of his wealth.

"My dear," he says to his wife, "I'm getting quite a pile together. I want to use it some way. Build a fine place. Fit it up."

"Will you stop to enjoy it with us?" she asks.

He promises. But he never performs. His enjoyment is not in his library, reading Tennyson and taking in the fine view. Rather down in his musty office, getting more money. He is made that way, and can't help it. A sleeping-car five nights in a week, not his elegant chamber, with its glorious view. Instead of his spacious bathroom, with costly perfumed woods, he uses the thumping end of a Pullman two hundred and fifty mornings in the year. His houses he knows he has, and that they are said to be fine; he paid enough for them, Jupiter knows; and he is going to enjoy them—next season. He is the mere treasurer of the family, the money-finder. The boy at college tries to love him, and the father is going to let him—next year.

Next year is the money-getter's great year. He'll be out of his press next year, have more leisure next year. Poor, self-deceived fellow! He would die if not making money or attempting it. He is made for it. He is fit for nothing else. He ought to know himself better than to even so much as dream of stopping. Other men envy him. The more fools they. There is but one cure for his slavery. That is to begin to give away. As fast as he makes let him give, and even he can be happy.

#### A QUATRAIN.

I have trod the upward and the downward slope;

I have endured and done in days before;

I have longed for all, and bid farewell to hope;  
And I have lived and loved, and closed the door.

**HERBS IN MEDICINE.**—Among the many ancient country customs that are dying out or being driven into utter obscurity by the progress of the times none is more decadent than the popular use of herbs in medicine. Fifty years ago, a knowledge of the curative properties of "roots an' yerbs" cut no small figure in the list of a good farm-wife's accomplishments, and every thrifty farmhouse garret was redolent of endless vegetable cure-alls, hanging in dry bunches from the rafters. To-day, except in remote places, the quaint old remedies are without honour and their benefits forgotten, while even the memory of their nature is fast falling into the realm of folk-lore.

**CENTRAL HEATING STATION.**—The rapid development of huge buildings in all parts of London, where thousands of persons dwell within limited areas, is sufficient justification of central stations from which hot water might be distributed for heating and for other domestic purposes. The blocks of buildings could very easily be heated from a single point, and if the supply of hot water for domestic use and electric current for light and heat were also undertaken, it is quite possible that the venture would be profitable all the year round. Heating stations of the kind are already in use in the United States, and from them hot water is supplied at fixed rates for warming radiators.



## Gleanings

ALWAYS forgive your enemies—especially those you can't whip.

SOME men are born great and grow smaller every day of their lives.

THE man with the new gold watch seldom knows what time it is.

A STRANGE COINCIDENCE.—Some of the old half-crowns which were recently unearthed in the grounds of the Guinness Trust at Dublin are stamped "XXX."

EGGS.—Denmark's export of eggs has been larger in 1901 than in any previous year, and the United Kingdom is still the largest consumer. The export during 1901 was 19,000,000 score, against 16,500,000 score during 1900. The value was £1,160,948, about the same as the exports from Russia.

PAINT VERSUS RUST.—The preservation of iron and metal from corrosion is a question of very great importance. Thousands of tons of paint are thus annually consumed in England alone in the attempt to preserve the metal of bridges and other structures from decay by corrosion. Without paint they would rapidly waste away under the destructive action of the atmosphere. Many other methods besides painting have been adopted in the attempt to protect iron from corrosion, but paint at present holds the premier place. Unfortunately, however, there is not a paint made, or used, that is a perfect preservative compound for protecting iron from corrosion.

SKULL-HUNTING PAPUANS.—The greatest inconvenience of living in British New Guinea is the possibility of waking up some fine morning and finding your skull missing, says a contemporary. The Papuans are incorrigible head-hunters, and their natural tastes in this direction have been intensified by the discovery that there is a profitable market for human skulls in London. Curiosity dealers here have actually sent agents to New Guinea to purchase skulls, many of which adorn the lofty tree dwellings in which the Papuans live. But these enterprising fellow-citizens of ours are likely to be checkmated by the Commonwealth Government, which has prohibited the sale of skulls, except for scientific purposes.

ENGLAND'S FIG GARDENS.—The industry of fig culture in Britain may be said to be centred in Worthing, though how this neighbourhood should come to possess the most extensive fig orchards it is hard to say. Those who have never had an opportunity of visiting the Worthing fig orchards would be astonished to learn of the size, age, and vigour this tree attains there. Even in cottage gardens in the immediate neighbourhood the fig tree thrives remarkably well. It is in and around the village of Sumping that the chief market supply of figs is obtained. The trees are here planted in groves, irregular now because some have died and been replaced by younger trees, and many of them are twenty feet high and as many through. They are not allowed to grow higher than this, otherwise the labour of gathering the fruit would be increased.

ARTIFICIAL BUTTERFLIES.—The preparation of artificial butterflies mainly consists in spreading with a camel's hair brush very thin gum or paste over the wings of ordinary butterflies, and then sprinkling over this certain delicate metallic powders of various colours. By this deft manipulation a very common butterfly can in a short time be transformed into one that is extremely rare. The fraud came to light through an alleged specimen of a red admiral, the fly so widely noted for its brilliant red and white hues. Sometimes the white specks turn blue, and a specimen in which this transformation has taken place is regarded as a great rarity. The dealer knew this, and naturally his red admiral had many blue specks. Unfortunately for him, the purchaser was suspicious, and, by the use of a magnifying glass and a damp brush, quickly discovered the fraud.

THE laziest man is he who won't even labour under an impression.

A BOY who was kept after school for bad orthography said he was spell-bound.

"THOUGH I speak but one language, I am familiar with many tongues," said a physician.

A GLANCE heavenward at the electric wires reminds one of the text, "Line upon line," and "precept upon precept" of course is constantly passing over them.

THE GENESIS OF THE MOON.—Children's views of many common phenomena are often very entertaining. A little girl, five years old, asked what happened to the sun after it set, promptly replied: "It rolls itself up in a little ball like a hedgehog. And that's the moon."

A SPARROW'S PECULIAR NESTING-PLACE.—A sparrow built its nest on a bar underneath a coal trolley belonging to Messrs. Montague Smith and Co., King's Lynn, and deposited four eggs therein. The vehicle was in daily use carting coal about the town, but when it was returned to the shed for the night the sparrow made its appearance and spent the dark hours on the nest. The eggs were not disturbed, and one day they travelled several miles without being broken.

WHAT THE IRISHMAN HAD READ.—An unlettered Irishman applied to the Philadelphia Court of Naturalisation the other day, when he was asked: "Have you read the Declaration of Independence?" "No, sir," was the reply. "Have you read the Constitution of the United States?" "No, sir." "Have you read the history of the United States?" "No, sir," he repeated. "No!" exclaimed the judge in disgust. "Well, what have you read?" "O! have red hair on me head, your honour," was the innocent reply.

PANAMA HATS.—A source of remunerative employment to the people of Porto Rica has been the making of straw hats from a native palm leaf of superior quality, similar to the famous straw used for the so-called "Panama hats," which are being exported in ever-increasing numbers to the United States, which new industry is giving employment to many women and children, both in the rural districts and in the towns, who formerly had to depend exclusively upon the wages of the male members of their families for support.

THE COURT OF THE EMERALD ISLE.—Another injustice to Ireland!—the Lord-Lieutenant has no longer the time-honoured privilege of kissing the fair debutante; and yet, it is whispered (without reflections on the gallantry of Lord Cadogan) that his Excellency has bowed, with cheerful submission, to the new decree. To be obliged, willy-nilly, to kiss a large multitude of Erin's daughters old and young, pretty and ugly, was not an unmixed blessing, and though no Lord-Lieutenant has been unchivalrous enough to beg to be excused, we may suppose that many of them were glad when the ceremony was over.

THE ABOLITION OF THE PILLORY.—On June 30, 1837, that barbarous institution, the pillory, was abolished by Act of Parliament. It was a direct lineal descendant of the stretch-neck, which existed in England before the Conquest. By a statute of Edward I. it was enacted that every stretch-neck or pillory should be made of convenient strength, so that execution might be done upon offenders without peril to their bodies. In the stretch-neck there was no accommodation for the arms, only the head being secured, while in the pillory the hands were brought up and secured on a level with the head. All manner of offenders were punished in this rough-and-ready manner. In 1267 Fabian says that Robert Bassett, Mayor of London, "did sharpe correction upon bakers for making bread of light weight; he caused divers of them to be put in the pillory, as also one Agnes Daintie, for selling of mingled butter"—offences for which tradesmen sometimes have to be pilloried still, though in a different fashion.

DOG CHARGED WITH MURDER.—One of the strangest things for a dog to do was done the other day by an Airedale terrier. The owner of this animal bought a small Cocker spaniel pup, and it was made much of by the members of the family. "Scottie," the terrier, utterly ignored the pup's existence. One morning the puppy was missing; and, after a fruitless search, the gardener remembered seeing "Scottie" come out of rhododendron bed, with nose and face much begrimed with earth. There the body of the pup was found, and it was plain that "Scottie" had first killed and then buried the poor little creature.

THE KING'S TUESDAYS.—It was stated recently that the principal events in the life of His Majesty King Edward VII. have happened on a Sunday, but Tuesday has the better claim to this distinction. On Tuesday, November 9, 1841, His Majesty was born; on Tuesday, January 25, 1842, he was baptised; on Tuesday, March 10, 1863, he was married; on Tuesday, December 8, 1863, he was appointed a member of the Privy Council; on Tuesday, November 21, 1871, it was definitely ascertained that he had contracted typhoid fever; on Tuesday, February 27, 1872, he attended the Public Thanksgiving Service for his recovery; on Tuesday, January 22, 1901, he succeeded to the throne; on Tuesday, January 29, 1901, the Royal Standard was hoisted at Marlborough House for the first time; and on Tuesday, June 24, 1902, His Majesty underwent an operation for perityphlitis.

EMIGRATING BIRDS.—In order to observe bird migration minutely, Mr. W. E. Clarke, last autumn, spent a month on the Eddystone Lighthouse. During the night of October 12 he witnessed a rush of emigrating birds, which lasted some hours. Most of them were British, but some feathered habitues of the Continent, including the red wing and the fieldfare, were among the contingent. Mr. Clarke described the scene as extremely singular, and beyond adequate description. The crossing of these birds at all angles, and their flutter as they passed the revolving gleams of light, the sudden illumination for a single moment, and the shadowy spectres fading away from the lantern's light, and travelled up the beams, only sight, and one long to be remembered. Some of the birds felt the enchantment of the lantern's light, and travelled up the beams, only to dash against the glass casing of the instrument, which lured them on to destruction. Many of them came with such velocity against the glass windows that they met their death by falling fatally stunned into the waters beneath.

A SHOWER OF CIGARS.—The King has always been exceedingly good-natured. Finding once that one of the men on the farm at Osborne was a great smoker he frequently took him a handful of his father's cigars, which he was not allowed to smoke, but was at liberty to give away. One day he gave the man a handful as usual, and another lot to another gentleman who was working with him. Not being much of a smoker, the latter promptly handed them to his companion after the Prince's back was turned. The smoker, therefore, had an extra quantity of cigars, and as he wore a tight-fitting coat was at a loss to know where to place them. At the suggestion of his cotrade he placed them in his hat. A few minutes later the Queen and Prince Consort suddenly made their appearance. The man made a profound bow and raised his hat, with the result that a shower of cigars fell around his head and on to the ground. Everyone laughed outright except the smoker. Many years afterwards, in 1838, when our King was the guest of Sir Thomas and Lady Ermore-Hesketh, at Easton Neston, Towcester, he met his father's old servant. He greeted him very warmly, pulled out his big cigar-case, and offering it to the man, said: "I know you smoke, but treat these cigars differently from the way you treated my father's!"

# ROYAL'S PROMISE

By FLORENCE HODGKINSON.

Author of "Ivy's Peril," "Guy Forrester's Secret," "Kenneth's Choice," etc., etc.

## SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS.

Sir Reginald Charteris lay dying, and anxiously awaits the arrival of his heir, Royal Charteris. Royal arrives in the nick of time, and the last words of his father exact a promise from him that the secret, he then confides to him shall not be revealed without the consent of the person concerned.

Nell Fortescue is left an orphan at the early age of ten, and is adopted by her grandfather, Lord Delamere. Unhappily, his lordship lived but a short time to watch over his grandchild. In his will he left her an ample fortune when she should come of age, with an allowance for her use in the meantime. Little Nell is left in charge of Mrs. Delamere, and not realising her fortunate position, and not being over kindly treated, she determines to fit herself to earn her own living, and for this purpose enters the convent of St. Hilda's. A terrible blow falls upon Royal. Mysteriously a man is murdered in the grounds of Marden, and suspicion falls upon him. Circumstantial evidence is so strong that Royal is arrested for the crime.

## CHAPTER VII.



ORD DELAMERE read the murder of his employé in the papers, and that Sir Royal Charteris had been taken up on suspicion of the dark deed. A kind of fierce, savage joy filled his breast. If John Dalrymple had spoken truth, and poor Claude had really been killed by a Charteris, here was vengeance indeed falling on the family!

Edwin drove straight to Mr. West's office, and had an interview with that able lawyer, requesting him to send someone to "watch the case," as it is termed in legal phraseology, on behalf of himself at the forthcoming examination. Mr. West listened with deep attention; but though a lawyer—a member of the profession said to have blunted their feelings by long familiarity with painful stories—he displayed great interest in Lord Delamere's story. He was an old friend of the family, he had known Edwin from a boy, and so, perhaps, he felt at liberty to speak plainly.

"I suppose half my fellow practitioners would be lost in admiration of your skill, Lord Delamere, but I can't congratulate you. It seems to me you have given yourself over to revenge as completely as though you were a savage chief instead of an English nobleman."

"At least I have succeeded!"

"Hardly," said the lawyer, coldly. "I don't fancy your mother would like the true story of your brother's death given to the world. I feel sure she will insist that it is more honourable for him to be supposed to have died of low fever than to have been the victim of a drunken brawl. You have gratified your own malice, and brought a terrible ending upon poor John Dalrymple, besides a fearful suspicion on Sir Royal Charteris, but I really don't see what else you have done!"

"I tell you my brother was foully murdered."

"Granted," replied Mr. West, with supreme calm. "Granted also that Mr. Dalrymple or Ralph Charteris killed him! What next?"

"It was Ralph Charteris!"

"Well, he has been dead for two years, and Dalrymple has followed him. I don't particularly see what results from your discovery!"

"I have it on John Dalrymple's solemn word that Ralph Charteris is alive!"

"Nonsense, my lord!"

Edwin grew angry.

"I assure you it is so. Dalrymple had gone to unearth him when he met his fate!"

"Either you are more credulous than I should suppose, or you are jesting with me, my lord!"

"Do you think I could jest on this subject?"

"Then you have been profoundly taken in."

I have a relation living at Marton who was tolerably intimate with the Charteris family. He actually read the funeral service over Ralph, and has told me, over and over again, that the death of his second son broke Sir Reginald's heart. I assure you, Lord Delamere, all hopes of vengeance upon Ralph Charteris are useless. He is beyond your power!"

"But Dalrymple—"

"Told you a lie. He felt your suspicions were on him. He wanted to escape the reward of his crime, and so he fixed it on his friend!"

"But—"

"My dear Lord Delamere, the man's history will show you how little he is to be trusted. In two years' time he sank—I have it on good authority—to nothing better than a card-sharper. There was not a house in London where he dared to show his face. You could not take his word unless supported by the strongest testimony. Why, then, should you believe just on his bare assertion that Ralph Charteris lives?"

Edwin groaned.

"A pretty mess I have made of it."

"But the misery of your mistake has not fallen on you," returned the lawyer, gravely. "One can hardly pity John Dalrymple much. He thoroughly deserved his fate; but I cannot say I am grieved to the heart for Royal Charteris."

"I have met him abroad; he struck me then as very different from his brother."

"He was one of the noblest, most generous-minded men who ever lived. His youth was clouded by his father's preference for Ralph. The latter's sudden death, and some disgraceful stories which came out about him, had made Royal grave and sad before his time. He had but just returned to take possession of his inheritance. All Marton—nay, all Hegustine—hoped to see him settled down at the Hall to a peaceful, domestic life; and now, through your cruel thirst for vengeance, his whole future is blighted."

Edwin felt a little ashamed of himself; he began to adopt Mr. West's view, and to believe John Dalrymple had been his brother's true murderer after all.

"I am very sorry," he said, tamely; "but, West, surely it's not so bad as you say; they can't kill him if he didn't do it."

"I think he did do it."

"And yet you pity him."

"Because I know the man so well by repute. I can tell so well all he suffered. His father was dead; he had come at last into his inheritance; he had the right to hope the nobility of his own life would make people forget the dark stories of his brother. He was full of hope and thankfulness that, at last, the dead past might be forgotten, when this man came to him. I can imagine the whole scene; how Dalrymple, knowing he could never earn your promised reward by producing Ralph Charteris, since the grave would not give up its victim, threatened Sir Royal with publicly defaming his brother's memory unless a large sum of hush-money was forthcoming. The newspaper accounts say that when he called at the Hall high words passed between him and Sir Royal; nay, more, that the servants were called on to turn him from the house, and that he threatened the molester of his peace with summary treatment if ever he ventured on the premises again. That is the story the papers tell us, and you will see that it agrees perfectly with my version of Sir Royal's character."

"But you think he did it?"

"Who else could have done it?"

"That is negative proof."

"Well, then, suppose that, smarting from this scoundrel's insolence, Sir Royal went for a long solitary walk in his own grounds; that even here Dalrymple had the audacity to follow him. I don't defend Sir Royal, remember. Murder is never justifiable, but I can imagine that in a moment of intolerable exasperation he fired the pistol, and freed himself from a mean and sordid persecution."

"You have read the accounts?"

"Fully. There is a telegram in to-day's paper saying that Sir Royal was arrested last night."

"I don't think he did it."

Mr. West felt perplexed.

"You know less of him than I do; you have little cause to like his family. How can you see any grounds for believing him innocent, where even I can find none?"

"It seems to me if he had wanted to make an end of Dalrymple he would have chosen some other place than the part of his grounds known by all the servants to be his favourite evening haunt."

"You forget my theory—that it was utterly unpremeditated; a moment's fury. The late Sir Reginald Charteris possessed, at times, an ungovernable temper. Calm and reserved, in usual, there were moments when he gave way to rage, almost like a maniac's."

"If he had done the deed in a moment's delirium would not his first thought have been escape? The accounts expressly say that Dr. White found him calmly smoking in his private sitting-room."

"We seem to have changed sides, Lord Delamere, and you to have espoused the cause of mercy. I own I should like to believe Sir Royal innocent, but I cannot."

"I think I shall go and see him."

"You! When you came here believing his brother had murdered yours?"

"You have shown me that theory won't hold, and that Dalrymple was the true offender. I feel, somehow, as you hinted to me, that I led to Sir Royal's being in this fearful position. I can at least do my best for him."

"Dr. White and my brother-in-law, the vicar of Marton, believe in him firmly. The worst point is that people declare there was an actual witness of the murder, and that her description of the man who fired the pistol applies tolerably to Sir Royal. On the other hand, the two servants who caught a faint glimpse of the fugitive declare it was not their master."

"Two against one."

"But the two are old family retainers, who hold the honour of the Charteris above all else; and the one is an utter stranger, a young lady working at the Sisterhood close by."

Edwin started.

"I hope it was not Nell."

"Surely you do not mean Miss Fortescue has entered a Sisterhood?"

"She is staying there for a time."

Mr. West looked stern.

"I should have thought a more congenial place might have been found, even as a temporary home for your grandfather's heiress."

"It was her own wish."

"The last time I saw your mother she told me our plan had succeeded perfectly, and that you and Miss Fortescue had arranged things to your mutual satisfaction."

"I mean to marry Nell; I have never told her so, but I mean to when she leaves the Sisterhood in September. She is eighteen only so there is plenty of time."

"Lovers were more impatient in my time," said Mr. West, coldly. "However, the wish is yours."

"I see no wish about it. My first duty was to my brother's memory. Nell went to the Sisterhood a child of sixteen. You may be quite sure no lovers have troubled her there; and my mother would never consent to her taking the veil even if she wished it."





"I WANT TO ASK YOUR PARDON, ROYAL," SAID DELAMERE, QUICKLY. "I FEAR I AM IN SOME MEASURE THE CAUSE OF YOUR PRESENT POSITION."

The lawyer shrugged his shoulders.

"Have you ever studied your grandfather's will?"

"Never. The one fact that Nell was his sole heiress was sufficient for me."

"He must have repented his cruelty at the time of her mother's marriage, for he left her as free as possible. Failing the guardian named in his will, I was to appoint another, who was to receive a certain yearly sum for Miss Fortescue's expenses. But from the age of eighteen the young lady was to be free to choose her own home, and no one's consent was required to her marriage provided that her husband was of gentle birth. For some weeks now by that will Miss Fortescue has been her own mistress."

"She does not know it."

"But surely she knows her prospects?"

"She has no idea of them."

"Well, if she chose to fancy a bank clerk with a pound a week for sole income, provided he came of gentle birth (and, alas! in these days that term is most elastic), she could marry him when and where she pleased."

"And the property?"

"The property is disposed of in any case. Whether she married a millionaire or a genteel pauper there would be no difference. She enjoys Delamere Court and its revenues for life. They revert to her eldest son, or, failing a son, to her daughter. If she died childless all would come to you."

"You have made me feel uneasy."

"Well, I think you have deserved it. You have not been an attentive lover by your own showing, and, remember one thing, please, Lord Delamere, if Miss Fortescue takes the veil she will have full power to give her life interest in the Delamere property to whatever community she joined. You would profit nothing till her death."

"I am hoping my next errand here may be to ask you to draw my marriage settlements," said Edwin, equably. "Nell never had any

objection to me. After what you have told me, I think I had better go to the Sisterhood after my call on Sir Royal, and propose to my cousin at once. I suppose the black-veiled ladies won't think it desecration of their abode to use it for such a purpose, will they?"

"I can't say," with a smile. "As the murder was within a few yards of their grounds I should say they had had enough desecration to last them for some time."

"Well, my mother must write and get Nell home. I daresay I seem a very mercenary wooer to you, Mr. West; but the fact is, for the last two years I have never even dreamed of Nell's marrying anyone but me. She seemed to come to me as a sort of legacy from Claude, and I never thought of anything but making her my wife."

"My dear Lord Delamere," observed the lawyer, with a smile, "I never called you mercenary. I merely take the liberty of observing that if one proverb cautions us against marrying in haste, another warns us that delays are dangerous. Of course, as you say, Miss Fortescue has had no chance of meeting with lovers at St. Hilda's; but if she resembles her mother she would be sure to find a great many elsewhere, so I advise you to lose no more time."

Lord Delamere went down to Blakesleigh that very day. He stopped at the hideous prison, and, sending in his card, asked to see Sir Royal Charteris. He was kept waiting some time. Dr. White and a lawyer were with the prisoner, and there seemed a doubt whether he could be admitted at all that morning. In fact, Royal had such painful associations with the name of Delamere he would gladly have refused the visit; but James Jordred, the lawyer, who had been telegraphed for the night before, was far too astute to lose any chance which might throw a ray of light over the mysterious case.

"You must see him, Sir Royal!" he said, with authority. "I have met Lord Delamere,

and I assure you he is the last man in the world to come unnecessarily."

So the mandate was given, and Edwin was ushered in, both the doctor and Mr. Jordred having kindly retired. It seemed to Royal Charteris that his visitor was suffering from extreme agitation. He seemed almost afraid to touch the hand Sir Royal extended to him.

"I want to ask your pardon," said Delamere, quickly. "I fear I am in some measure the cause of your present position!"

"You! Impossible!"

"I fear so," waiting for a moment's thought as to how he could explain himself without mentioning the name of Ralph Charteris. "But for me the miserable man who troubled you last Monday would never have dared to present himself at Marton. I found him on the first of last June sunk to the lowest poverty in London, even the scanty allowance he received from his brother forestalled. He professed himself anxious to go abroad, and to make a new start. He appealed to me by his old friendship for my brother. I promised to give him a free passage to Adelaide, and help to start him in business there if he would first prove to me he had no hand in Claude's death. I don't ask what he said to you; I don't seek to know; but I feel certain he would never have disturbed your peace but for my having, as it were, believed in him and taken him from the miserable Whitechapel court to something more approaching respectability. I assure you I regret my share in his coming here most sincerely, and I hope you will at least believe me when I say so."

Royal Charteris sighed. Twenty hours of imprisonment had made him take a far more serious view of his position than he had been inclined to ten days before. Then he deemed it rather a needless caution to silence the only direct testimony that could be given against him. Now it seemed to him that even without Miss Fortescue's voice there was ample evidence to convict him again and again.

"I believe you," he said, "with the ready courtesy which never failed him; and I thank you for the trouble you have taken in coming here to seek the pardon of one whom the world deems a murderer."

"Not the world!" corrected Delamere, pleasantly. "Why even if all Marton thought you guilty, which I can't believe, that would be a very small corner of the world!"

"The appearances look very dark against me!" said Royal, slowly. "I have been reading the papers myself this morning, and even, I must confess, anyone seeing those accounts could come to but one conclusion."

"The best service anyone could do you would be find the real murderer, I should say," returned Edwin, thoughtfully.

Was it fancy, or did a convulsive shiver really pass over that manly form? In a moment Sir Royal had recovered the chill feeling of fear which doubtless caused it.

"I think, Lord Delamere, the true murderer will never be discovered. Myself, I believe firmly the 'Marton murder' will be a mystery for all time."

"But then—" "But then it will go hardly with me," said Royal, completing the sentence the other had left unfinished. "Well, I think it will. I have a firm conviction I shall never leave this place a free man."

"Nonsense! Your friends ought to scold you well for being so desponding."

"They do their best," said Royal, gravely; "the Vicar tells me over and over again that no harm can befall the innocent. Dr. White has a theory of his own, that a tramp he met in the lanes the night before must be the true criminal. Two of my own servants were in time to catch a glimpse of the man who fired the shot, but such an indistinct one, they declare they should not know him again; but then, poor fellows, they admitted that he was tall, and had dark, curling hair, which undoubtedly applies to me; while their devotion to our family is so well known, I fear the jury will not place implicit faith in their protestations. They were not near enough to retain a good impression of the man's face."

"An *alibi* would be your best help."

"An *alibi* would save my life; but it seems hard to find. I was alone in the grounds on that fatal night from half-past seven till nine. There is no doubt the murder was committed at a quarter past eight, and I distinctly remember hearing the bells ring out the curfew (an old custom in our village, which invariably happens at eight in summer and seven in winter) while I was standing at the little gate leading to the public footpath across the park, a good two miles from the scene of the murder. I stood there some minutes, for a gipsy girl came up and tried to make me have my fortune told. I gave her a shilling, but stopped to ask her some questions."

"If only she could be found!"

Royal shook his head. "Most likely she and her people moved on that very night. Then gipsies can't often read, so she would not be likely to see the case in the papers; besides, there is a grave reason why she would object to coming forward. That very night I lost my watch!"

Lord Delamere looked surprised.

"Lost your watch! In the grounds?"

"I had been rambling in the wood. I felt thoroughly put out after my interview with Dalrymple, and I wanted to be alone. Scrambling through a thicket the fastening of my chain gave way, and my watch fell with a jerk to the ground; the glass was broken, and the hands stopped at five minutes to eight. I had been looking at the watch just as the curfew sounded. I was wondering if there was much damage done to it, as it had been a present from my father. I am positive I replaced it in my pocket before I spoke to the gipsy girl, but when I got home it was missing. If, as it seems to me probable, she stole it, there is no hope of her turning up!"

"No, she would fear imprisonment; but could not she be advertised for and a free par-

don—even permission to keep the watch promised if she would come here?"

Sir Royal looked the least bit more cheerful.

"The watch would be a powerful witness in my favour," he said hopefully, "for as the hands would have stopped at five minutes to eight it would bear out my statement!"

Not a word was said by Lord Delamere of the rumour he had heard that a young lady would be called as a witness who had seen the murder actually committed.

Sir Royal expressly mentioned his own servants were the witnesses whose testimony would tell most against him; and after hearing that Edwin could hardly repeat the report he had heard, which was most likely an idle invention, after an hour's interview he rose and shook Sir Royal's hand heartily.

"You are sure to forgive me my share in your troubles?"

"I am positive!" then came a feverish light into the sad, beautiful eyes. "I wish, Lord Delamere, all the forgiveness had to come from my side; but I fear in the old days, when your brother and mine were sworn companions, Ralph, as the elder, was to blame for a good deal of poor Delamere's wildness. From my father's letters I fear the name of Charteris must have had a bitter ring in your ears for the last few years, and I am glad to have met you, and told you this!"

Edwin felt strangely captivated by the rich, musical voice, the dark, beautiful eyes.

"Our brothers were friends," he said, simply. "I should like you and myself to be the same. Poor Claude paid a heavy penalty for his folly; but why should what is past cast a shadow between you and me? I should like the world to know, Sir Royal, that the names of Delamere and Charteris were linked together once again in true friendship and intimacy, this time not as mere boon companions and pleasure-seekers."

"You don't know what you ask?"

"I think I do."

"Remember the assizes are in a month's time. If I am committed for trial in five weeks I may be a convicted felon."

Lord Delamere went away with a strange anxiety at his heart. One text of Scripture which he had wilfully disobeyed for the last two years would ring in his ears incessantly, "Vengeance is mine, and I will repay, saith the Lord."

It was a relief to leave the prison, and after a pleasant drive he stood once more on the threshold of St. Hilda's; but the vaguest bewilderment was written on the face of the little portress when he asked to see Miss Fortescue.

"Miss Fortescue is not here."

"Where is she then?"

"I don't know. She went away all in a hurry last night. Miss Ward went too. They did say," whispered the portress, with a burst of confidence in an awestruck tone, "they did say that a policeman came and fetched 'em."

"Christine, what are you chattering about?"

It was the calm, authoritative voice of the Superior. But even Sister Ida grew pale as she came forward and recognised Lord Delamere. Little Nell's cousin and guardian was the very last person she wished to see.

"This is an unexpected pleasure, Lord Delamere," she began, when Edwin had been conducted to her private room. "Miss Fortescue thought you were in America."

"I have returned, you see. My mother will be in England next week, and it is our wish that my cousin should then return to us at her earliest convenience."

"I will tell her."

"Pardon me," said Edwin, blandly, "but I will do that myself if you will kindly let me see her. The child at the door said she was not here, but that, of course, is a mistake. You could not," and he spoke very decidedly and severely, "allow a young lady entrusted

to you by her friends to leave your keeping for any but their own?"

"Miss Fortescue pleased herself," said Sister Ida, coldly. "I would not keep her here against her will."

But that she was a woman Edwin would have said something more; as it was, his words, though occasionally polite, were full of bitter satire.

"Perhaps you will kindly signify to me whether Miss Fortescue's will has taken her. I must confess I should have thought you less helpless than you profess. My cousin, when she came to you, was a docile child; you must have changed her wonderfully if she has become in two short years an unmanageable young lady."

"I have done her no wrong!"

"I can neither agree with nor differ from you until I hear what you have done with her."

"Mrs. Delamere always gave me to understand she had the strongest objection to Helens becoming a Sister of Mercy."

"An objection I share. If you have sent Nell away to prevent her from taking the veil, madam, you have my warmest thanks."

"I understood Miss Fortescue was an orphan."

"Precisely. But even orphans have friends who like to be consulted as to their disposal. Once more, madam, may I entreat you to speak plainly. Where is my cousin?"

"At Marton Hall."

Edwin started. He at once identified Nell as the heroine of Mr. West's story, that a young lady was the strongest witness against Royal Charteris, but even then he had no idea of last night's ceremony. His conclusion was that to save Nell the unpleasant publicity of appearing as a witness she was temporarily secluded in some secret chamber of the old mansion. He knew that the Hall was several centuries old; that it belonged, in fact, to the period when every family of note had their secret hiding-place wherein to conceal friends in time of danger.

"A rash act," he said, slowly, "considering that there is no lady at Marton Hall—that its master is young and unmarried."

"Lord Delamere," said Sister Ida, utterly bewildered, for the two were at cross-purposes, "what can you mean? It would have been far worse had Sir Royal been old—or married!"

"Hardly! My cousin would then have been his wife's guest. Now I confess I hate the idea that even to save his life she is hidden in his house."

"Hidden!" exclaimed the bewildered Sister. "There is no hiding in the matter. She went there openly last night. Dr. White escorted her, and I sent another young lady to bear her company. All the servants were drawn up in State to receive her, and she took her place as Lady Charteris quite as a matter of course."

"As what?"

"As Lady Charteris!" Then, perceiving he was still bewildered, "They were married here last night in our chapel by special license; it was the only thing to do. Her testimony would have killed him, and only as his wife could she be spared from giving it."

"It was the only thing for him, I grant, but she was in your charge. You might have thought of her."

"I did."

"I fail to see it."

"She was an orphan whom no one wanted. Your own mother told me she was nothing but a trouble and expense to her. I have a letter now in my possession, in which Mrs. Delamere tells me that she will not hear of her niece becoming a Sister. The girl is to return to her in September, and, painful as will be the task, she shall endeavour to accomplish her marriage. Instead of indignation, Lord Delamere, I expected thanks. I have relieved your mother of the task she dreaded, and accomplished Miss Fortescue's marriage without any assistance from Mrs. Delamere."

Edwin bit his lip.



"I always told my mother truth was best; that it would have been far wiser to tell you the whole story."

"What story?"

"That instead of being a portionless orphan, my cousin was a great heiress. Delamere Court and its revenues are hers unconditionally, and the marriage my mother was so anxious to accomplish was one between Nell and myself. My mother is a proud woman, and she tries to hide the fact that I am really a pauper peer, and nothing in the world but a marriage with my little cousin could restore the family estates to me."

A gleam of compassion shot through the Sister's dark eyes.

"I am sorry," she said, gently. "Lord Delamere, be generous, and try to look at the matter from my point of view. To me it seemed that she was a lonely little child whom no one particularly wanted. The union might save Sir Royal's life, while as for her it gave her, so I thought, wealth and position. I knew she had cared for no one else, and he was a Charteris. He could not be unkind to any woman, much less to one who had sacrificed herself for him. At the worst, I thought of her as a wealthy widow; at the best, as a good man's wife."

"I cannot blame you," said Edwin, kindly, "believing her simply a burden to us. I can understand your reasoning; it is a miserable business. For her sake and his own I trust Sir Royal will come well out of it."

"And you forgive me?"

"I repeat I cannot blame you."

"Will you go to see her?"

"Whom?"

"Your cousin."

"Little Nell! Yes, I should like to see her. Happily, she has never heard of the family compact. She will not know the hopes her marriage has frustrated. I am not the least in love with her, but I honestly meant to make her happy."

Sister Ida sighed.

"I cannot fancy Nell unhappy. She seemed to me to possess the most wonderful power of making sunshine for herself. She is a dear little thing, and we all miss her."

Lord Delamere felt like the victim of some delusion as he walked up to Marton Hall. He thought of his interview with Nell in the shabby London school-room, and again of their parting, and the indignation she had shown at his career. Well, another had the right to caress her now.

The old butler received Lord Delamere with the utmost respect. Edwin gave his card, and requested to see Lady Charteris, saying she was his cousin.

"My lady is in her room," said the old man, simply. "I will ask Miss Ward if she can receive you, my lord."

He ushered the visitor to a pretty sitting-room, hung with pale blue silk; and after a few moments' suspense there came to him the prettiest of damsels, with a pair of laughing black eyes, and the most captivating gipsy face. She looked at him a little diffidently.

"I am Nell's friend," she said, frankly, "and if you are going to scold her I won't let you see her."

Lord Delamere smiled.

"I have no such intention. Had we not better introduce ourselves? I am Edwin Delamere, Nell's nearest relation."

"Lord Delamere?" said Phyllis, with a little stress on the title, "and I am Miss Ward. The Sisters always forbid me to speak to strangers, but I suppose in this case they will forgive me."

"You don't mean that you live at St. Hilda's?"

"Why not?"

"You don't look like it in the least."

Phyllis looked at him with a glance of mock reproach.

"Don't, please, tell me that; I have heard it so often. I know it by heart. All the Sisters in a body have told me I carry worldliness stamped on every feature. One suggested I

should cut off my hair; another that I should wear spectacles; while a third was sure a course of religious teaching would improve me. I honestly mean to take all their pieces of advice some day, but at present I have forgotten to."

"Long may your neglect continue," said Edwin, gallantly. "I can't imagine what took you to such a place as St. Hilda's!"

"The uninteresting fact that I was of the surplus feminine population. There was nothing particular for me to do. My friends knew Sister Ida, and thought it would be the making of me to come here."

"And has it been?"

Phyllis laughed.

"Really, you are too inquisitive. At present the chief effect of which I am conscious is a strong longing for anything in the shape of gaiety. A penny reading last year seemed a perfect harvest of dissipation."

"And now you have left St. Hilda's?"

"I am taking care of Lady Charteris."

They both grew grave. Acquaintances of a moment as they were, Edwin felt he could trust this merry girl for a truthful answer, so he asked—

"What do you think of it?"

"Of what?"

"The marriage."

"I am sorry."

"Why? Are you sorry for him or her?"

"For her."

"But Royal Charteris is a husband any woman might be proud of."

"Only pride is not Nell's strong point. She is so simple and old-fashioned as to believe in love."

"Well, she might learn to love him."

"That's the pity of it."

"Why?"

"She loves him now. You see they had told her romantic stories of him beforehand. I believe, poor child, she made a hero of him before she even set eyes on him!"

"If she loves him, of course, she believes him innocent?"

"Of course."

"Then why should she be unhappy?"

"Because, blind as she is in some things, there is one point on which she is clear enough—she knows perfectly well Sir Royal has married her without a spark of affection."

"Well?"

"It isn't well. She is just fretting to death over it. It's in vain I preach to her; my eloquence is entirely thrown away. 'Don't fret, Nell,' I tell her, 'if he doesn't come to his senses it is his loss,' but it's no use, she just looks at me and begins to cry. If I tell her she is Lady Charteris of Marton Hall, which is a great deal better than just being plain Mrs. So-and-So, instead of being grateful for the recollection she asks me if I am heartless."

"And you tell her?"

"I tell her yes."

"But are you?"

"Certainly."

"Why?"

"I can't afford a heart," said Phyllis, ruefully. "I'm always in hot water with the Sisters now. Oh, dear me! what would they say if I developed such an inconvenient thing as a heart?"

"But you don't mean to stay here always?"

"I don't know. We all grieved our fortune on Midsummer's Eve. If mine comes true, I certainly shall not stay at St. Hilda's."

"What was it?"

"I was to receive a certain appendage, which, I may observe, is generally useless except to the owner—not half so good a fortune as Hester Stanhope's. She was to have a red brick house and a brass knocker."

"Happy Hester Stanhope!"

"To be sure. What could be more suggestive of comfort and substantial means than a red brick house, not to mention the brass knocker?"

"What was Nell's?"

"Nell's has come true already. She was to save a life. I suppose she has saved Sir Royal's. I hope he will be properly grateful."

"I hope so too. Miss Ward, as I have not the least desire to scold such an important person as Lady Charteris, won't you let me see her?"

"Remember, if I do, and the murder comes up, you are to profess entire faith in Sir Royal's innocence. A doubt would kill her!"

"As I have the faith, it will not be difficult to profess it. Happily for them both the assizes are next month. A few weeks and Sir Royal must be condemned or acquitted!"

Phyllis came back with Nell. Lord Delamere realized then what he had lost. She was a pretty creature, this cousin he had meant to marry as a condescension. Then it came upon him that black eyes were more fascinating than brown ones, and that in all the world through he had never met such a bewitching face as Phyllis Ward's.

"I have seen Sir Royal!" said Lord Delamere, when Phyllis had left him alone with Nell. "Surprised as I was to hear of your wedding, and strangely as it has come about, I must congratulate you. I like him very much."

"And you believe in him?"

"Firmly!"

Nell raised his hand and pressed it to her lips.

"I know the man was like him, but Sir Royal never killed John Dalrymple, Edwin; he could not have done such a thing."

"You have entire faith in him, then? And so, Nell, this is the end of your wish to live in a Sisterhood! Don't you think you imposed on the Sisters dreadfully?"

Nell shook her head. She had no time for words. Giles opened the door, an expression of joyful triumph on his face as he ushered in a small poorly-clad child, who walked up to Nell, holding in her hand a gentleman's gold watch, on the back of which was the Charteris crest.

Lord Delamere glanced at it, and saw the glass was broken, but the hands had stopped at five minutes to eight. He knew then that Royal Charteris was safe.

"Look up, Nell!" he said, kindly; "this watch must convince people Sir Royal's account of himself was true. He is as safe as though he were free now, and in this house."

Nell looked not at the watch, not at the child who brought it, but straight into her cousin's face.

"Do you mean he would have been safe in any case now even if he had not married me?" she asked, feverishly.

"Yes. You see the watch, which was found more than two miles from the scene of the murder, with the hands stopped at five minutes to eight, proves that Sir Royal could not have been by the river at the time the murder was committed."

Nell turned to him with a sob.

"Oh, Edwin, then the marriage was not needed after all! Can't it be undone? Can't I set him free?"

Before he could speak she had read his answer in his eyes. With one bitter sob she fell back senseless; and the child who had been till then a silent spectator of the scene, shook her little fist at Lord Delamere, and said, angrily,—

"You've killed her!"

"My Popsy!" he exclaimed, as he recognised the little waif; "what brings you here? And then he rang furiously for assistance, little thinking that poor Nell would have welcomed death gladly, since it seemed to her far less pain than knowing herself a helpless burden on a husband who had but married her to secure her silence.

Poor little Nell!

(To be continued next week.)

This story commenced in No. 2,043. Back numbers can be obtained through all News-agents.

# EDEN'S SACRIFICE

## CHAPTER XXXIII. (Continued).

**I** WILL not believe you," she cried, vehemently. "He did not know of the legality of my marriage, and he is not your husband. In spite of Wilfred's association with you, and the life he has led, he is a noble man, who would scorn the wild act you impute to him."

"Have you really fallen in love with my handsome but scoundrelly husband? If I believed that I think I should be willing to forego my revenge for the amusement it would give me to tell Herbert. Why, my dear, it would break his heart," scornfully, "for badly as you have treated him he worships you."

"How do you know?"

"I see him every day. He and your brother are scouring the country for you. He has offered the most enormous rewards for you, or for any information concerning you."

A brilliant light burned in Eden's eyes, a vivid crimson had sprung to lips and cheeks. She was supernatural in her wild, thrilling beauty.

It aroused in Alice the hatred of a demon. She saw how frail was her chance against her rival, and an expression of infernal determination darkened and distorted her features.

She went nearer to Eden, her hand thrust into the pocket of her dress. The door opened noiselessly, but neither she nor Eden heard it. Gordon was upon the threshold. He recognised Alice, and paused to listen, trembling with gruesome excitement.

Regardless of Eden's loathing, Alice laid her hand upon her shoulder with a painful pressure.

"You love him!" she cried, with fiendish hatred—"you love him! Well, so do I! Do you know what it means for a woman like me to love? It means death, or worse, to the object that stands in her way. It is your infernal beauty that he loves. Do you think that I will give you to him? Do you think I will ever allow you to stand in the place I covet? Never! I have had my revenge upon Gordon by telling you the truth concerning him. I know that you will have nothing more to do with him now that I have told you how he has deceived you. Now I will have my revenge upon you. Go back to Herbert Staunton and see how he will stand the test with your cursed beauty spoiled! Go back and tell that I did it because I will not see you in the place that rightfully belongs to me, because I love him more than you ever can. Ha! ha! I shall watch him turn from you in disgust and loathing, then my revenge will be complete."

She stepped backward and drew her hand from her pocket, holding in a firm grasp a small, dark object.

Gordon had listened with a slow, paralysing terror creeping over him. The menace of her words had prepared him for some horrible thing, but nothing so bad as that she contemplated.

A piercing cry fell from his lips as he saw what her hand contained and understood her terrible design.

Before he could reach her she had drawn the stopper from a bottle, and, with a quick motion, would have thrown the contents full in Eden's face, but that Gordon caught her arm, and the frightful liquid fire was thrown backward, her own face receiving what she had intended for another.

A shriek of indescribable pain rent the air as the terrible vitriol began doing its work. A sound like the terrible frying of human flesh filled the room, and scream after scream of hoarse agony rang through the house.

Quick as thought Gordon sprang to the table and seized a bottle of oil, pouring it

over the frightful burns; but it was too late to prevent the vitriol from doing its hideous work.

The house was quickly filled with people, attracted by the dreadful screams. Doctors and nurses were summoned, but the blue eyes were sightless for ever, the beautiful face that had wrought such mischief among men was a sickening blot.

When he could leave Alice in more skilful hands Gordon approached Eden.

Her face was white, and drawn with horror. "Let me take you to your room, my darling," he whispered, gently.

She drew back, with an expression of such loathsome terror as he had never seen upon any face.

"Don't touch me!" she cried, with repulsive energy. "I know you now for what you are. Go, before I tell all I know, and hand you over to the police, as you deserve. I pray Heaven I may never see your detested, abhorred face again!"

He looked at her once earnestly, yearningly, then turned and went.

How was he to know that she believed him to have done that hideous thing through revenge? How was he to know that she considered him worse than a murderer?

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

"A gentleman to see you, ma'am."

Catherine entered Mrs. Brown's room, and found her, as she was all the time now, gazing with despairing calm from the window. The sentence was repeated the second time before it was heard; then it was with the weariness of death that Doris turned to her.

"A gentleman!" she repeated, vaguely. "Who?"

"He would give no name, but begs that you will not refuse him a few moments' conversation."

"I will go down."

"Pardon me, ma'am, but your hair is not in order. If you would have no objection to my arranging it, I could do it in a moment."

The kindness of the tone, the evident desire of the woman to do something for her, touched Doris's desolate heart, and mutely she submitted herself to Catherine's deft fingers.

She did not even resist when her wrapper was loosened, and a dainty silk dress substituted in its stead.

She thanked the woman with a look, and went downstairs, unconscious of how beautiful she was under all her grief.

It requires a touch of sorrow to mature the beauty of a woman's face, as it requires dew to mature the beauty of a flower.

Slowly she descended the stairs and mechanically entered the drawing-room, where her guest waited.

He came out of the shadow to meet her, but it was not until he had taken her hand and pressed it gently that she recognised him.

She staggered, and would have fallen, but that he caught her and placed her in a chair.

"Doris," he said, softly, "have you no word of welcome for me?"

She lifted her great, haggard eyes to his face wistfully. It had grown older and was lined with sorrow, but it was the face she had loved—loved still, even better than she knew. And her eyes expressed it all in a wild longing that was pitiful, while her lips remained dumb.

"My poor girl!" Walter Marchmont whispered, seating himself beside her, "how you have suffered!"

"You—know?"

"All—yes. Mr. Staunton called upon me this morning. You would not send for me in your sorrow, but you see I have come."

"Not send for you!" she cried, wildly, staggering to her feet and beating her hands together. "What right had I? Where was

my trust in you when you were accused! What sympathy did I offer you in your grief! Did I try to save you? No—oh, no! I turned my back upon you, and wrote you a letter, the very remembrance of which dries up the blood of my heart. And then I married him."

"You loved him!"

"I loathed him!"

"Doris!"

"Do you think my anguish now is because of him? No—a thousand times, no! I am glad he is to suffer the penalty of his sins."

"Do not say that! I have some comfort for you, dear. He did not wrong you as he pretended. You are his legal wife."

"Comfort! Do you call it so? I abhor him now more than ever."

"You are bitter."

"Could I be otherwise? Look at me! What am I? The wife of a thief! What hope does life hold for me? But one, and that the hope that somewhere in this great world I may discover some place where I can hide myself."

"Can you not see how unnecessarily hard you are? There are those of us—old friends, tried and true—who are waiting with outstretched arms to receive and comfort you."

Her head reeled as she looked into his kind eyes.

"No, no!" she muttered, dully. "I could never stand the shame of it all. To be pointed at as *his* wife would kill me. Oh, Walter, how can you stand and look at me with such gentleness, knowing what humiliation I have caused you? But if you desire revenge, it is full, complete. Look! I am a wreck. Joy, peace, love, hope are stranded, leaving nothing—nothing!"

"You never loved him, then?"

"Never!"

"You are sure?"

"How can you see me and ask? Why need I care to tell you? It will but make your revenge the greater. I am sure because, now that I have lost you for ever—for ever—I know that there is not, and never has been, room in my heart for another. Now you know. You cannot despise me more than you have done."

"Despise you!"

There was a world of tender sympathy in the tone. He took her hand and gently forced her into a chair, taking a seat beside her.

"Doris," he said, softly, "I have a story to tell you. After I have told it, I am going to ask you a question, and upon your answer to it much of my future depends. I think the passion has been all killed in my nature, but if you can overlook it there may be happiness for us yet."

She listened in a dazed sort of way, drinking in the tones of his voice with trembling eagerness, her eyes wandering over his face and resting upon each feature with incalculable love.

Gently and quietly he told her the story of Eden's life, and of her connection with his own. He told her of his love—of how he had suffered when he lost her.

He neither exaggerated nor under-estimated anything, but told her as fairly as he knew exactly the state of his feelings.

"I have tried to make you understand," he concluded, "that I loved her passionately, devotedly, as I perhaps shall never love again. But love is not immortal. Absence and time will conquer it! Doris, is your love for me strong enough to make you trust me in face of that? Will you believe me, and give yourself to me, when you are free, as you soon shall be? Will you try to forget that anyone ever came between us, and bear with me patiently until I can do the same?"

"Walter!"

She had endeavoured to rise again, but he held her gently.

"I know it is a cruelly cold way of asking a woman like you to be my wife, but will you not trust me, dear?"

"Your wife!"

"It will all come right by-and-by, dear."



Do you think I would say so if I did not know?"

"Oh, Walter," she panted, "you cannot know what you are saying! You are asking me, the wife of a thief, to marry you—you whom I have—"

"Never mind that. You love me, do you not?"

"Love you!"

The tone was enough. No further words were needed. The excess of wildest idolatry was encompassed in it.

"I thought so," he said, reverently. "If you love me, dear, can you not trust me?"

"With my soul!"

"Then you *will* be my wife. There! perhaps I should not have asked you until you are free, but the circumstances are such that I think not even Heaven would blame me. You were never his except by fraud, dear, and that does not hold good before Heaven or man."

"I cannot believe it!"

"What?"

"That I am really to be yours at last. Oh, Walter, is such joy always behind blank despair?"

"I hope your despair is done, my poor dear. When your freedom is obtained, and you are mine, we will go away together—away where we can both learn to forget."

"I do not wish to forget, Walter. I want always to remember the great wrong which you have forgiven me. I want always to remember your generosity, your nobility. I want to remember that you are a god among men, so that my wild worship of you may not frighten me. Ah, Walter, it is the misery of the past that shows me the joy of the present by contrast! Without it I could not know, could not feel the thrill of exultant happiness that leaps through my veins."

He shaded her face, with its tremulous love, upon his bosom, and looked over her head into the shadows of the past.

His mental vision rested upon a small, dark, passionate face, that made his heart grow cold for the moment—cold with the fear of self.

He knew that he had never loved, could never love, as he loved Eden; but in that hour he planted flowers above its grave, cruelly holding down a struggling passion.

He would do his duty, he told himself. He had not been false to Doris, he had told her the truth; but he would repay her tenderness by never referring, even remotely, to that other love. If he must suffer, he would do it in silence, and some day he would learn to love her as she deserved in return for all her tenderness. She should never feel his neglect, never know but that she was first and best.

That vow he registered above her head as she rested in his arms, and to the end of his life he kept it.

The peace for which he prayed came later; and though forgetfulness never came, he learned to love his wife—if quietly, none the less tenderly.

#### CHAPTER XXXV.

As the ambulance bearing the suffering woman was driven from the door, the ominous report of a pistol, crisp and echoing, was heard, evidently proceeding from the floor above.

Lewis, followed by several others, hastily mounted the stairs and flung open the first door to which he came. There was no need to go further.

In the centre of the room, surrounded already by a pool of blood, Gordon lay, the still smoking revolver beside him.

"He has killed himself!" exclaimed Lewis, densely, laying his hand above the man's heart.

Someone pushed his way into the rapidly filling room.

"I am a doctor!" he cried. "Is there anything I can do?"

The crowd fell back to make room for the medical man, and Lewis turned to him eagerly.

"I am afraid it is too late," he answered,

with unusual feeling. "But do what you can."

The physician bent above the prostrate man, and ripping his vest and shirt away, examined the ghastly hole just above the heart.

He lifted his head hopelessly.

"He cannot live an hour, and may never regain consciousness," he said, grimly. "Put those people from the room, and help me to make him as comfortable as possible for the short time he has to live."

Together they removed the man's clothes, cutting them from his body, and placed a night-shirt upon him.

The doctor had stopped the terrible bleeding, and as he and Lewis stood looking upon the pale, cold face, the dark, haggard eyes opened. They were lifted wistfully.

He did not seem to suffer, but the shadow of death was already upon his brow.

"Where is Eden?" he asked, with painful effort.

A soft rustle of garments near the door was heard, and before Lewis could answer, Eden stood beside them.

A gentle smile broke over his stiffening lips.

"I saved—your life—little one," he said, wearily. "Poor Alice! Will someone tell her that—I am sorry—her act recoiled—upon—herself?"

Eden bent forward eagerly.

"You did not do it purposely?" she asked, breathlessly.

"Throw that vitriol on her?" he inquired, in horrified astonishment.

"Yes."

"Oh, Eden! Am I not guilty enough—without your—charging me—with so cowardly—an act as that?"

"You did not, then?"

"No."

"Thank heaven for that! Oh, Wilfred, Wilfred, what have I done?"

"Nothing, child, nothing. Doctor, will you—not leave me—here with her? I—"

"One moment!" exclaimed the physician.

"You did this yourself?"

"Yes."

"You have but a few minutes to live. Shall I summon a clergyman?"

"No. Leave me the moments that I have."

The physician bowed, and with Jim Lewis left the room.

Eden drew a chair beside the bed, and took the hand of the suffering man in both her own. Her face was wet with tears.

"Why did you do it, Wilfred?" she cried, in a choked voice.

"Because—I had not the—courage to face my life—without you. Eden—you are an angel—to speak to me—like this when—you know how I have—wronged you."

"She told the truth, then?"

"Did you doubt it?"

"I did—oh, I did!"

"It was true, dear—all true. But I never intended—to make you—my wife—in—reality until I had—the legal right. You—will trust—the word of—a dying man—and believe that—will you not?"

Swiftly memory returned to her. She thought of how reverently he had treated her in every instance, and the hardness that had crept into her heart softened.

"Yes, I believe you," she said, gently.

"And you—forgive me?"

"I do, from my soul."

"I never hoped for it. Even—in my dreams—I used to start up—feeling how—you would curse me—if you but knew. Try to—remember—dear—that it was all caused—by a strange—wild love, over which—I had no control whatever. I—have sinned—greatly. Perdition is—ready to receive me—yet dying—I would brave it—for one kiss—from your lips."

"Hush—oh, hush!" she cried, clasping his hand more closely and bending nearer to him.

"It is so wicked—so wicked! Wilfred, you are standing almost in the presence of your

Maker. Beseech His pardon. If I have forgiven, He can."

"To meet—you there—Tell me just once! Do—not be impatient. Let me—have these last—moments—as—my own. If things had been—different—should you—ever have loved me?"

She thought an instant. With the memory of Bertie Staunton before her she knew that she could not, but if she had never met him—

"Yes," she answered. "I should have loved you!"

The radiance of his countenance repaid her.

"I—can—die now," he muttered, brokenly. "Eden—the end—is nearly here. Forget—forget—and—kiss me!"

She bent her head until his face was wet with her tears, then she pressed her lips upon his with gentle tenderness.

"It is—enough!" he whispered.

And with his eyes resting upon her face his soul departed, to find either rest or eternal ruin. Eden dared not think which.

She opened the door and gently called the doctor. He and Lewis came together.

The smile was still upon the white face, peaceful and loving.

Lewis seized Eden's hand.

"You made his last moments happy, miss?" he asked, brokenly.

"I tried."

"Heaven bless you for that! He was the only human being on earth I loved. He had his faults, but his virtues were those of an angel."

A silence fell upon them.

A white-faced woman, with disordered hair, had staggered into the room. She caught Lewis's hand in a grasp that was terrible.

"I got your note, Jim!" she cried, hoarsely. "For Heaven's sake, tell me it is not true!"

For answer he pointed silently to the bed, and the woman turned.

She neither moaned nor cried out, as her eyes rested upon the rapidly-stiffening features, but like a piece of animated stone she glided to his side and stood looking down upon him.

"No word of farewell to me," she whispered, in a dumb, emotionless way—"no thought even, when I would have given my life gladly for you. But what am I, that I should have expected it? I could only worship you from afar, but I did worship you, my prince, my hero! Dead! dead! dead!"

Slowly, as though life were giving way, she sunk down upon her knees, her head falling gradually to her lap.

Lewis laid his hand upon her head gently.

"He would not wish you to grieve, Catherine," he said, softly.

She lifted her stony face mechanically.

Her gaze, instead of falling upon Lewis, rested upon Eden. She dragged herself wearily to Eden's side, and lifted the hem of the dainty wrapper until her lips rested upon it.

"He loved you," she said, dully, "and because of that you are sacred to me. You seem a part of him. You will let me see you sometimes, will you not? You will pity me, because I have loved him even as he loved you, only with perhaps greater self-sacrifice."

"Poor Catherine!" Eden whispered—"poor, unhappy one!"

The small hand rested upon the woman's cold face, and turning her lips rapidly, Catherine kissed both palms.

It was Jim Lewis who sent a message to Herbert Staunton and Malcolm Carlton—Jim Lewis, the thief, whom the contact with death had converted to an honest man.

Tender and respectful as a loyal peasant to a queen he was to Eden. He knew how Gordon had wronged her, and that she should forgive him so fully and freely raised her to the level of the angels in Jim Lewis's eyes.

In the little stuffy parlour a bier rested. Upon it Wilfred Gordon lay, his turbulent soul at peace. A calm smile remained upon his lips, and even death could not rob the dark, thrilling beauty that had characterised him in life. Few had understood his nature—few care to

understand a thief—but under the influence of love the germs of nobility in his soul might have blossomed into wondrous beauty.

Beside him a bowed woman sat, strangely broken in spirit. Silver threads that had not been there twenty-four hours before glistened in the soft brown hair. She neither moved nor spoke; she did not seem even to think, though now and then a low, suppressed moan escaped the white lips.

Through the long hours of the night she sat there, her forehead bowed upon the icy hand of the dead. She was nursing herself to say a long farewell to the man she worshipped from afar, but it was the bitterest trial of a life filled with grief. He had saved her from death, protected her in life, had been her unflinching friend always, and she had allowed her wild, untutored heart to set him up as an idol. She had never expected any return. It was right that he should love another, and she loved that other for his sake; but he was hers in death, and the pale lips smiled as she kissed him.

Poor Catherine! The recompense was small for a life of suffering.

#### CHAPTER XXXVI.

Herbert Staunton had drawn his hat well over his eyes, picked up his cane, and was starting for town to fill an appointment with his detective.

He had lost hope, and the old bitterness of the first days of his stunning grief oppressed him.

He opened the door mechanically, and found a messenger in the act of ringing the bell.

"Is Mr. Staunton in?" the boy asked.

"I am he," answered Bertie, with no animation.

The boy drew from his pocket a not over-clean envelope and pink slip of paper, saying laconically,

"Sign!"

Staunton jotted down his name carelessly.

"Any answer?" he asked.

"No, sir."

The boy started down the steps, and pausing to light a cigar, Bertie walked leisurely down the street, tearing open the envelope as he went. He unfolded a jaggedly torn piece of paper, and read:—

"Mr. Staunton,—

"Dear Sir.—A most serious accident has happened. It involves someone closely connected with you. Come at once to — Street.

"Respectfully yours,

"JAMES LEWIS."

Over and over again he read the letter, then paused in his walk and seemed to consider deeply.

A cab with a jaded horse and a half-drunken driver was passing. He hailed it, gave the number and street indicated in the letter, and soon found himself before a plain dwelling. He rang the bell.

"I had a letter," he began, to the man who answered the summons.

"From Jim Lewis," the man interrupted. "Yes, I am he. You are Mr. Staunton. Walk in, sir."

"You spoke of an accident—"

"Yes, I know. I have a surprise for you. Will you step in the parlour?"

Bertie removed his hat and walked, somewhat bewildered, into the small room, furnished with haircloth and guiltless of ornament of any kind.

He did not sit down, but laying his hat upon a table, stood watching the door anxiously.

Herbert Staunton had not long to wait. The door opened at last, and a small figure appeared in a dainty wrapper, with a face peeping from under its weight of recent tears, like a flower under dew.

He sprang forward with a wild, glad cry.

"Eden, Eden, is it you? Oh, my darling! my darling!"

He would have clasped her in his arms, but she pushed him away from her gently, her sweet eyes gazing with dazed joy into his.

"Bertie!" she cried. "I cannot believe it is you. Wait! You did not want me before; why do you seem so glad now?"

"Not want you! Not want you, Eden! My own, my wife, there was never a time when I would not have given my life, my soul, for you. Do not keep me from you. Oh, Eden, how hungry my heart is!"

Then she forgot all but her supreme, overmastering love for him, and yielded herself to his embrace.

It was a moment that would have paid for ages of suffering.

"Not there," he exclaimed, when she would have seated herself beside him, "but here against my heart. Eden, is it really my wife I hold?"

"Your wife, thank Heaven for that!"

"And Gordon—"

"Hush! He lies up there, while his soul faces the Eternal Judge. He erred, Bertie, but he also repented. Forget the wrong he did, and remember what he might have done and did not. Bertie, look at me. A marriage ceremony was said over Wilfred Gordon and me weeks ago, yet I have never been any man's wife save yours."

He clasped her closely, a gratitude too deep for words rendering him speechless.

"You will never know," he said, after a pause filled with emotion, "how I have suffered. How wildly happy I was when I found that you lived, for with you living there was the knowledge that all the caverns of earth were not large enough to hide you from my love."

"And yet, when I threw myself at your feet that night, you stood still and allowed Wilfred Gordon to take me unresisted."

"Eden!—reproachfully—"you believe that of Malcolm and me! Oh, darling, cruel little one, we have slept neither night nor day, planning, searching always. How can you have doubted our love?"

She shivered slightly, but the warmth of his eyes thrilled her heart.

"I did not know. I was mad mad! Bertie, can you ever forgive me for that and for all the rest?"

"Don't talk to me of forgiveness. There can be none between you and me, for there can be no offence. I adore your very faults, my own. How good Heaven is!"

"Yes, very good. It removed the cause and left us for each other again. Is my brother not coming to me?"

"He does not know yet. We will go to him in a moment, then together you can tell us of the dangers through which you have passed. I can think of nothing but love now. You look so frail, my little one."

"I have been very ill. It is only his great love that saved me for you. Poor Wilfred! But he saved me from a more hideous fate to day."

"What?"

"Not now. Let us forget it all in this hour if we can."

"I shall know no comfort until I have told you all the unhappy secrets of that past which divided us, my wife."

"I know it all in that I know myself to be your wife. Every joy and hope and happiness is expressed in those words. I wish to know no more. You are the prince of men, the king of kings, and I the most blessed of women."

"This is the heaven of heaven, my own, my love. No rapture can exceed or even equal it. Mine again, this time for ever."

Herbert and Malcolm listened together, each holding a small, almost transparent hand as she told the story of her wanderings, kissing them tenderly now and then as mute expressions of loving sympathy.

She said no word of Walter Marchmont's love. That was a subject too sacred to handle.

"It was a noble sacrifice to love," he exclaimed, when she had finished; "but I would

have given every drop of blood in my body to have saved you it."

"Oh, no!" Eden answered, kissing him with subdued passion. "It has been hard, but there is a long, joyous future awaiting us—long enough and bright enough to make us forget the darkness that divided us. After all, I was well treated in comparison with some of whom I have read. Don't you remember, Malcolm, how the people used to say that I should have to suffer some day for my impulsiveness?"

"Yes, dear. I hope it is over and done with now."

"I don't know," with a short, merry laugh. "I am so happy now that I am beginning already to forget. I feel as if I should like to take the whole world of my embrace, and make every one in it as full of joy as I am."

Neither of the men spoke. Both were vainly endeavouring to swallow lumps that were rising in their throats.

"There is a moral to it all, Malcolm," she exclaimed, with affected solemnity. "You must never select a wife without my permission."

The blonde face of the young man became suddenly overcast with crimson. He arose and walked to the other end of the room, but Eden and Bertie were too much interested in each other to notice.

It was a reunion of souls after a passage through the valley of the shadow of despair.

#### CHAPTER XXXVII.

Two days later Malcolm Carlton stood before the dwelling opposite his own.

He mounted the steps and pulled the bell gently.

"Good afternoon, Bessie," he said to the little maid who answered the ring with suspicious promptness. "Is your mistress in?"

"Yes, sir."

"Ask her if I may come up."

"I know you may, sir. We saw you coming across the street, and Miss Nellie said she knew you were coming here."

"Did she?"

"Yes, sir. She's in the sitting-room, sir."

"Thank you. I'll go up."

He walked by the girl and ascended the stairs slowly, as though some fresh trouble awaited him there. He knocked softly upon the door of Nellie's boudoir, and a sweet, girlish voice bade him enter.

A soft, clinging gown of black imparted to the little figure and tender face a thrill that touched even deeper than beauty.

She put out both hands eagerly, and Malcolm clasped them closely.

"I am so glad for you!" she cried, smiling into his face. "Mr. Staunton came to tell me the good news yesterday. I intended to have called last evening upon your sister, but some new boarders came, and I could not well leave. Will she receive me to-night?"

"Gladly. How good you are to be so pleased at our good fortune!"

"Ah, who should if not I? You and Mr. Staunton are the only friends I have ever known except—"

"Yes, I know. Don't let us talk about that now. I came on purpose to ask you to come to-night. You know Eden is not strong."

"I know."

"We concluded last night that she requires change of climate and of scenery. We are going to America. A Canadian sails to-morrow, and we have determined that the sooner she leaves the better. Since the excitement is over, she seems dreadfully nervous."

"And they go to-morrow?"

"Yes, we go to-morrow."

There was a pause.

Something in the use of the pronoun struck Nellie as ominous. She lifted a pair of frightened eyes to his face.

"Do—go go!" she stammered.

"Yes."

"Oh!"

The exclamation was a peculiar one. The tender, tremulous lips had become suddenly,



strangely dry; her eyes glistened, and a sharp pain stabbed through her heart.

She turned upon her mental self proudly. What right had she to care? she asked herself. He had been kind to her—that was all, that was all.

But the pride died, and a bitter weariness came upon her.

"I shall—miss you," she said, drearly.

"Is that all, Nellie?"

"Perhaps—not quite," endeavouring to subdue the sharp misery she felt must be in her voice. "Papa had few acquaintances, and it will be lonely for me. You have been so kind that I have learned to watch eagerly for your coming—Mr. Staunton and you, and—"

It was a sob! She struggled bravely against it, but it mastered her.

"Nellie!" exclaimed Malcolm, going a step nearer.

"See what a baby I am!" she hurried on, endeavouring to smile through an incrustation of tears. "I feel as if you were never coming back, and that I should never see you again. Of course, that is perfectly absurd. You won't quite forget me, will you? and when you return, Mr. Staunton and you will look me up, will you not?"

"I can't answer for him, but I shall never forget you, Nellie. It would be taking the sweetest memory from my life."

She did not reply, but stood with downcast eyes, twisting a small, plain ring upon her finger.

"Will you not ask me to sit down, Nellie?" Malcolm said, gently. "Only half my errand is done. I have something else to tell you."

She pointed to a chair, and would have seated herself upon another, but that Malcolm took her hand and drew her down beside him upon a sofa.

"We have known each other so short a time, Nellie, and you are such a child!" he said, softly, trying to look into the sweet, shy eyes, which she kept averted. "I wonder if you can understand and believe in the sudden leaping into life of a passion that will hold the heart and soul enthralled for ever?"

He waited for a moment, but she did not speak. She forgot to do so—forgot that he held her hand, in the wild thrill of exultation that shot through her heart.

He loved her! She knew it because she felt the vibration from his soul to hers, and it intoxicated her with mad, reeling joy.

"I told you," he said, drawing closer to her, "that I had completed but half my errand. Nellie, will you listen while I tell you the other half? It is that I love you, dear—love you with all the strength and fervency of my nature. Before you speak to me, let me tell you the unhappy story of my life. Let me show you the difference, if I can, between love and imagination; and then, Nellie, if you think you can love me in the real way, you will give the greatest joy it has ever known to a tired heart. Will you listen, dear?"

"No, there is no need. I know it all. Mr. Staunton told me all."

"Then I need not detail to you the nauseous story. It was not love, Nellie, but fascination—the loss of self for an hour in a maze of the brain wrapped in the luxuriance of personal beauty. It was never for a moment love, and I had begun to realise it before I lost her. There was no heart grief when I discovered her character—only a blow to my pride. But you—I have not allowed myself to consider a refusal. I think it would—kill me!"

"You have been so good to me—"

"Not gratitude—not gratitude!" he cried, dropping her hands as though the soft flesh had burned him. "Anything but that! I must have all or nothing—love for love, heart for heart, soul for soul!"

His face was strained and suffering, and glancing up for the first time, Nellie saw it. She put out her hands to him with impulsive tenderness.

"I love you next to Heaven!" she whispered, with irrepressible emotion.

With a low cry of incalculable happiness Malcolm clasped her in his arms.

"My darling—my wife!" he murmured, rapturously.

Half an hour later Bessie knocked at the door.

"Miss Nellie," she said, "a lady is downstairs asking for board."

"Tell her the house is full!" exclaimed Malcolm, unable to keep the gladness out of his voice.

"But you are mistaken, sir!" cried Bessie, opening her eyes very wide.

"No, I'm not. It is full, but not of boarders, thank Heaven! Go down and send the lady away, Bessie, then come up here. Miss Nellie wants you to help her pack a trunk—or, rather, to pack it yourself while she goes out with me."

"A trunk, sir?"

"Yes! Ladies usually travel with trunks, don't they?"

"Travel, sir?"

Malcolm laughed outright.

"Your mistress is going to sail for America to-morrow morning," he explained.

"Are you poking fun, sir?"

"No, of course not. We are to be married to-night, and to-morrow we are going away for our honeymoon. Would you like to go as Mrs. Carlton's maid, Bessie?"

"Indeed, then, I should, sir; but I can't believe it yet, sir."

"I can hardly believe it myself, I am so absurdly happy."

"But the house, sir!" exclaimed practical Bessie.

"We'll leave that in the hands of an agent or something. My lawyer will attend to it. But you are forgetting the lady in the hall."

"So I am, sir."

The girl went downstairs, delivered some kind of a dazed message to the woman in the hall, and after she had closed the door upon the retreating figure she stood, half-bewildered, gazing about.

"To think he should choose my Miss Nellie, a quiet little thing like that!" she said, speaking the words aloud. "Why we read only last Sunday a list of the men worth more than a million, and he and Mr. Staunton were both mentioned way up. My, but he is rich! And it will all belong to Miss Nellie. Well, she deserves it all, and more. Heaven bless her!"

A quiet little wedding was performed that night.

The bride, with radiant happiness bubbling through sadness that was a memory, was clothed in a dainty, clinging white, unmarred by colour. The sweet face would have been considered almost beautiful but for its close proximity to the tropical loveliness of Eden, who seemed to shine with a new glory.

She was happy in her brother's happiness, but her eyes were lifted now and then to the dark, passionate face over at her side, and smiled with bewildering content.

"No one on earth could be so blissfully happy as you and Bertie," she whispered, pressing the hand that held hers shyly. "I do not envy an angel!"

"My own wife!"

"Yes, that is it. All the joy conceivable by mortal is expressed in those three words. I loved you once before, I adore you now."

"My idol!"

But they were not happier than Malcolm and Nellie in their more subdued way. Her recent loss caused Malcolm to calm his enthusiasm; but their quiet glances, their gentle hand-clasps, told each other enough.

It was the rest needed by a weary soul to both, the sweet peace of infinite content.

Bessie looked on, her eyes resting lovingly upon her young mistress, and sparkling with delight.

"She isn't as pretty as Mr. Staunton's wife," she whispered, ruefully; "but the sun never shone on anyone so sweet and pure!"

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

"An old friend is in the drawing-room, and wishes to see you, my darling!"

Eden glanced into her husband's face inquiringly.

"An old friend?"

"Yes. Walter Marchmont."

The beautiful face crimsoned painfully, and leaning above her chair, Bertie whispered:

"I am afraid you have not told me the entire history of those day, my Eden."

She looked at him reproachfully.

"I had no right to tell you the secrets of anyone's life, Bertie," she answered.

"I know that. Will you go down?"

"Yes."

He kissed her at the door, and with deepest pity in her heart Eden went down alone.

Walter's emotion was too deep for words as Eden joined him. He took both her hands in a firm grasp and lifted them to his lips. She could not see how pale he was for the moisture of tears in her own eyes.

"Thank Heaven, you are safe!" he murmured, when he could command his voice, "Eden, Eden! I—"

He broke off, and with his handkerchief wiped from his forehead great drops of moisture; then, by a mighty effort, he controlled himself.

"We were terribly distressed—mother and all of us," he finished, tamely.

"Yes, I know. You were all so very good to me. I love your mother as much as I could my own. Is she well? And how is Sybil?"

"Both well, and loyal to you always. They will be so rejoiced to hear of your happiness, Eden. And you are happy, are you not, dear?"

There was a wistfulness in the tone infinitely touching, and it was very gently that she answered:

"Yes, I am happy, Walter."

There was a long pause, filled with feeling;

then Marchmont said, slowly:

"You sail to-morrow, do you not?"

"Yes."

"I thought that was what—your—Mr. Staunton said. You will not quite forget me, Eden?"

"Could you think it? You were the best friend I ever knew."

"I would always be that, loyal and true."

"I am sure of that."

"There is something that I want to tell you, Eden, and I scarcely know how. Before I knew you, dear, I was engaged to a very beautiful young lady. She married another man, and I discovered that it was not love I had felt for her, but a most sincere admiration. But that was destroyed at what I believed to be her dishonourable treatment of me. Well, Eden, I found her several days ago—found her in distress and misery. The fault had not been hers, poor girl, and—Eden, she is Mrs. Brown, and when I can free her from the clog that was dragging her to desperation I am going to make her my wife."

"Oh, Walter, I am so glad!"

His face coloured violently, but he continued to look over her head with a steady stare.

"I knew Mrs. Brown," Eden continued, "and was so very, very sorry for her! You will give her my love, will you not, and tell her how glad I am!"

"I will."

"I will write from New York."

"That would be very kind, but I had rather you would do it only once, Eden. Forgive me, dear, but for her sake I want to forget you. There is nothing but starvation that can bring death to my love for you—denial of food of thought or word. I did not mean to speak of it, but perhaps it is our eternal farewell, Eden, and it may be better so."

He spoke with a stony calm that was horrible, and Eden stretched out her hands to him with tender sympathy.

"You must not think it!" she cried. "In a few months you will learn to love her as you should, and then you can meet me as you would a sister."

"I hope so," lifting the damp hair from his brow with weary unrest.

"It will be so, believe me. Oh, Walter, don't look so miserable! I feel so unutterably selfish in my happiness that—"

"You must not! Do not think I am not glad for you! Why, I would have given my life to have procured this happiness for you!"

"I know you would."

"I am going now, Eden. It is good-bye, dear, for years in any event. Will you—kiss me once?"

She did not hesitate, but lifted her mouth as a child might have done—innocently, purely. His lips touched hers and fell away, half chilled.

He sighed.

"Good-bye!" he said, huskily; "and Heaven bless you!"

He did not look back as he left her, but went unsteadily, as though he dared not trust his strength further.

Herbert Staunton found her there a few moments later.

"Why, Eden," he cried, gaily, "one would think you had been to a funeral instead of a wedding!"

She smiled a trifle wearily.

"There is always a shadow behind the sun, is there not, Bertie?" she asked, softly.

He understood, and drew her protectively within his strong arms.

"Yes, my dearest," he answered, gently; "but as the world turns, the sun shines on all."

In the grey of the morning a merry party were driven to the pier.

As Eden was lifted gently from the carriage and stood beside her husband, a cold hand was laid upon her arm.

She turned, and saw a pale-faced woman beside her.

"Don't you know me, Mrs. Staunton?" the woman asked, duly.

"Why, it is Catherine! You have changed!"

"Yes, sadly changed. I heard you were going away—Jim told me—and I wanted to say good-bye and God-speed."

Eden's eyes filled slowly.

"That is very kind of you, Catherine."

"And I wanted to take a word of forgiveness from you to a poor sufferer that lies nigh unto death in a hospital."

"Alice. She was my sister, ma'am."

"Your sister?"

"Yes, ma'am; but her beauty was her ruin. She is delicious now from the terrible burn, and her beauty is gone for ever. The doctors think she will get well, ma'am, and I know that there will come a time when a word of forgiveness from you for the wrong she did do and the greater one she tried to do would be the greatest comfort to her."

"You may give it to her freely and truly, Catherine. I had given it without the asking. Poor woman! Is there anything that I could do for her?"

"Nothing, ma'am. There was a time when I despised her for the manner in which she wrecked his life, and I felt that it would be a pleasure for me to kill her, but all that is changed now, ma'am. I think I would give my life to bring back the beauty to that poor, scarred face. It will be a horrible blow to her, ma'am, but I will do what I can to comfort her."

"You are a good and noble woman, Catherine."

"I wish I deserved your words, ma'am. Thank you for your great kindness to me, and if I never see you again, may Heaven be with you."

"And you."

She turned away, and was soon lost in the shadows of a sunless day.

The party—a happy party—ascended the gang plank and left the old life behind, joyous in spite of clouds.

Six months later there was a death in the hospital, and with a tearless countenance Doris watched all that was left of Hugh Brown confined to earth.

There was no sham traces of tears, but with gentle kindness she sighed over a gruesome fate.

A year later she and Walter were married. In her wild happiness she grew peaceful and at rest, remembering the old love as a passionate dream and an awakening. His mother loves Hildegard devotedly, but there is a corner of the loyal old heart sacred yet to Eden.

Sybil is the same little hoyden, loving and beloved. It is to her sometimes, as they sit hand in hand, that Walter talks of Eden, but it is in a way that his wife would approve if she heard.

Jim Lewis is a reformed and respected man, and his wife has changed from a pale-faced, sad-eyed creature to a rosy, joyous little woman, happy in her husband's honesty and tenderness.

They very frequently call at a little ivy-clad residence out from the city, where a blind woman with a face horribly scarred is waited upon patiently day after day by a broken-hearted sister. If Alice is querulous, Catherine is always gentle, soothing, and loving.

It is a pitiful picture, but a retribution.

Herbert Staunton and Malcolm Carlton, with their wives and Bessie, are still in America, with no cloud even as large as a man's hand to mar their perfect joy.

Past sorrows are laid to rest, pride is sunk in perfect love, and there is no happier woman upon earth than Bertie Staunton's wife!

[THE END.]

#### THE SENTRY AND THE DONKEY.

Some few years after the Indian Mutiny I joined the Army Hospital Corps, and was sent out to India. During the time I was out there the following incident occurred, says "F. H." in "The Sapper":

I, then a sergeant, together with a section of men, was attached to a regiment which was proceeding on a long march to another station, halting at various places on the route. On one occasion we halted for the night at Fort S—, where I was ordered by the senior medical officer to make the necessary arrangements for the regiment. Now one of the doctors had bought a beautiful donkey for the use of his children, which was placed in my charge. On arriving at Fort S— I had a difficulty in finding accommodation for "Sally," but knowing the "dead-house" was empty, I decided to put her in there for the night, forgetting at the time that it constituted part of a post where, when on duty, the sentry had orders to knock at the door with the butt of his rifle at frequent intervals to prevent the rats from mutilating any dead body that might be there. On this particular occasion the sentry, thinking one good knocking would save him further trouble, commenced hammering at the door in a terrific manner, which so startled the donkey that it immediately set up a shrill braying. The sentry at once dropped his rifle, and bolted off to the guardroom, where he arrived terrified and speechless, it being some time before he was able to explain things. I was sent for, and after informing the sergeant of the guard where I had placed the donkey, and having obtained the keys we went round to the "dead-house" with a light, and found poor "Sally" in a terribly nervous state and still braying piteously, evidently having been quite as alarmed as the sentry.

When the story leaked out in the morning, needless to say the poor sentry came in for a great deal of chaff.

LADY BOOK AGENT (to irascible man):

"Why do you swear at me, sir?" Man: "Because, madam, gallantry forbids me throwing you out of the window."

#### Gems

If you want to see worldly ambition struggling with a righteous desire to be good, take a woman to church with an old hat on.

The fountain of content must spring up in the mind, and he who has so little knowledge of human nature as to seek happiness by changing anything but his own disposition will waste his life in fruitless efforts and multiply the griefs which he purposes to remove.

ALL that God desires is to give you His great love, so that it may dwell in you and be the principle of your life and service; and all that withstands God's desire and His gift is the want of room for it, and for its free movement, when that room is taken up with yourselves and your little personal interests.

GUILT, though it may attain temporal splendour, can never confer real happiness. The evil consequences of our crimes long survive their commission, and, like the ghosts of the murdered, forever haunt the steps of the malefactor. The paths of virtue, though seldom those of worldly greatness, are always those of pleasantness and peace.

No one who has ever known what it is to lose faith in a fellow man whom he has profoundly loved and revered, will lightly say that the shock can leave the faith in the invisible Goodness unshaken. With the sinking of high human trust the dignity of life sinks too; we cease to believe in our own better selves, since that also is part of the common nature which is degraded in our thoughts; and all the finer impulses of the soul are dulled.

#### THE GOLDEN AGE.

The Age of Gold—the Golden Age,  
When life was life indeed,  
Has gilded many a sombre page—  
Served many a poet's need.  
I sing the Golden Age that is,  
Not days of fabled glory;  
Nay, I myself once lived in this  
Same age of song and story.

Then men were heroes formed for love  
And war—brave, wise, and good;  
Then women reigned by virtue of  
Their perfect womanhood;  
Then more than fame, than lust of wealth,  
Than empty power of splendour,  
Were simple pleasures, buoyant health,  
Our friend both true and tender.

Then strange, wild beauty lurked within  
Each common wayside weed;  
The brook stopped on its way to sing  
Weird tales to who would heed;  
Then labour without thought of wage  
Was crowned with teeming plenty;  
What is this wondrous Golden Age?  
Why, nineteen years or twenty.

#### All Women & Girls

who value their complexion, and who like to keep it fresh, clear, and beautiful, should use PERMOLINE SOAP. It keeps the most delicate skin free from pimples, roughness, blackheads, and eruptions, and you should give it a trial. Mothers should wash babies with it as it is most beneficial. Permoline Soap is supplied by chemists at One Shilling per Tablet, or sample will be sent post free for 1d., by Cherub Soap Co., Ltd., Bootle.



## Facetiæ

"PA," said little Harry, "what is a soldier of fortune?" "A soldier of fortune, my son, is a soldier that never has any fortune at all."

A somewhat ambiguous advertisement in a recent issue of a daily paper announces that "a second-hand girl's side-saddle is for sale."

LADY (in new grocery store): "Have you any ten-year-old port wine?" Boy: "No, mam, this grocery store was only started last week."

MAUD (at day school): "Oh, George, I do so love a big dog." George: "I wish I was a big dog." Maud: "Don't worry, you'll grow."

We have no objection to a man who rides a hobby—not even if he rides it to death. We only protest when he takes up the whole road with it.

The young man who persuades himself that two people can live as cheaply as one can always find a girl to help him to try the experiment.

EVEN if a boy is always whistling "I want to be an angel," it is just as well to keep the preserved pears on the top shelf of the pantry.

GOODMAN: "Our new minister is troubled with insomnia." CYNICUS: "He should swallow one of his own sermons each night before retiring."

FIGGS: "You have an independent income, haven't you?" DIGGS: "Independent? Well, I should say I had. It has utterly ignored me for years!"

He stood under the window and sang, "How can I leave thee?" But he did leave, and so suddenly that the dog went back to the house and wept.

"So you were a soldier? Did you go clear through the rebellion?" "No, I married during the war, and have not got through the rebellion yet."

"I FEEL it just as much, my dear little boy," said papa, after he had spanked Billykins. "Yes," sobbed Billykins; "b-but-n-not in the same place."

HUSBAND: "No blue-stocking for me! An ignorant woman makes a far better wife." Wife: "Am I a good wife, John?" Husband: "Yes, you are an ideal one."

WAITER (at the village club): "There's a lady outside who says that her husband promised to be home early to-night." All (rising): "Excuse me a moment."

LITTLE DOT: "Papa, I mis' have a new dress to play in." Papa: "What in the matter with that one?" Little Dot: "It's all worn out 'cept the buttonholes."

When a girl has a handsome new solitaire diamond engagement ring, the thought involuntarily comes to her mind, how foolish it is for women to wear gloves so much!

They sat together on the front piazza on a midsummer day. "Do you know that this is the longest day in the year?" he said. "I believe you," she answered, yawning.

YOUNG LADY (to gentleman): "No, I should never suit you; I want my own way in everything." He (magnificently): "Well, and you could go on wanting it when we were married."

INDUCTIVE OFFICER: "How is this, Murphy?" The sergeant complains that you called him names." Private Murphy: "Plaze, sorr, I niver called him any names at all. All I said was 'Sergeant,' says I, 'some of us ought to be in a menagerie.'"

"And what," asked the young woman who is sometimes facetious, "is the rank of the individual who brings up the rear with a bucket and a tin cup?" "Oh," replied the member of the militia, without hesitation, "he's a lemon-ade de camp."

HIS REVERENCE: "What, off to work at last, Tim?" Tim Murphy: "Yes, y'r reverence. Y'know, Oi'm a haymaker by trade, an' I always work one week in the year."

THE meanest man so far on record lives in the Isle of Man. His wife asked him to give her a pet, some animal that would stick to her, and the next evening he brought home a leech.

"HIGGLEDY doesn't seem to care so much for his wife as he did when she was Miss Brown." "No, they are one now, and Higgledy isn't the man to be guilty of inordinate self-love."

"Isn't this your prayer-book, Miss Chaser?" "Why, yes; thank you, it is. How did you know it, Mr. Blunt?" "When I took it up, it opened at the marriage service."

BRIDE (just after the wedding): "Alfred, you promised to give me a grand surprise after we were married. What is it?" Bridegroom (a widower): "I've got six children, my pet."

DEACON SKINNEB: "My dear friend, I grieve to find you so worldly-minded. Why don't you come to church with me?" Mr. Paywell: "Because it worries me to see a half-starved minister."

MIDDLE-AGED SPINSTER (as tramp comes into the yard): "What do you want here, anything to eat?" Tramp: "What else should I want, madame? Did you think I came to offer a proposal of marriage?"

INDIGNANT BICYCLIST: "Madam, your dog snaps at me every time I pass. Here he comes now." (Starts off.) Old Lady: "Spot, Spot, you foolish dog. Come here. Them ain't bones. Them's legs."

"I EXPECT to die young. All my ancestors were exceptionally short lived," says Mr. Talkington. "Indeed!" says Miss Pruyn. "Yes, my grandfather died in infancy, and —" Miss Pruyn: "Oh!"

CONTRIBUTOR: "Here is a manuscript I wish to submit." Editor (waving his hand): "I'm sorry; we are all full just now." Contributor (blandly): "Very well, I will call again when some of you are sober."

"UNDERSTAND your mother-in-law helps your wife, old fellow, a great deal?" "Oh! lots; gave her a set of old buttons yesterday, and she rushed me for the money this morning to buy a dress to match them."

MISTRESS: "Bridget, we will have cotelettes for breakfast to-morrow morning." Bridget: "The servants don't like cotelettes, marm." Mistress: "But I like cotelettes." Bridget: "It's hardly worth while to get them for one."

RICH UNCLE (to his physician): "So you think there is hope for me?" "Not only that, but I can assure you that you are out of danger." "Very well; I wish you would inform my nephew, but break the news gently to him."

THOMAS: "I don't like to boast, don't cherknow, but I'll have you to know that I am always present at all the society events. What d'yer think o' that?" Henry: "I think you must be a waiter. Can't account for it in any other way."

"VAT," said the collector for a little German band to a man who sat in his front window, "you no gif noddings for dot moosic?" "Not a halfpenny," replied the citizen, with hopeless emphasis. "Den vo blay some more, dat's all!" threatened the collector, so the refuser hastily gave up the coin.

A CERTAIN official was bothered almost to death by people running in on him at all times of the day, and he was expressing himself emphatically on the subject. "Why don't you put a time lock on your door, so they can get in only at a stated hour?" suggested a friend. "Time lock, nothing," he exclaimed; "what I want is an eternity lock."

## Trifles That Cause Death

How apparently trifling are the things which have meant life or death to some of the world's greatest personages! The great Napoleon was killed by a disease brought on by eating onions in excess. A pea-nut choked a South American President; a scratch from a poisoned pin killed one of England's most beautiful women. On the other hand a powerful medicinal preparation, so compact as to be in the size of a small bean, and known universally as Bile Beans for Biliousness, saved the life of Miss E. J. Marshall, of 17, Grosvenor Crescent, South Cliff, Scarborough, who, in a chat with a "Scarborough Mercury" reporter, said:—"I was suffering from indigestion, biliousness, and general weakness. For days I would have attacks of biliousness, and for eight months I was in a shocking state. I could not eat, I felt always utterly wretched and tired, and yet healthy rest was impossible. I tried various medicines, but in vain. One day I saw an advertisement recommending Bile Beans. I gave them a trial, and I soon felt I was gradually recovering my health. I took the Beans regularly, and in a comparatively short time I was quite cured of my ailments." Bile Beans are a certain cure for indigestion, biliousness, general weakness, sleeplessness, "summer fog," drowsiness, anæmia, skin eruptions, pimples, and all blood impurities. Of all chemists, or post free from the Bile Bean Manufacturing Co., 119, London Wall, E.C., for one and three-halfpence or two and nine.

## THE SOUL UNBOUNDED.

No petty bounds has God around us drawn, Nor will He close us in a narrow space; Undaunted and unsatisfied, the soul Of man cries out for other, larger worlds. Not any world, not all the worlds, can sate That quenchless thirst God only can appease; That breath divine into his nostrils breathed When the Almighty Parent gave him life.

## Another Bright and

## Vivacious Romance

By

A FAVOURITE CONTRIBUTOR

\*\*\*\*\*

The next issue of the LONDON READER will contain the opening instalment of an entertaining and delightful Story, entitled

## HER MISTAKE

BY

EFFIE ADELAIDE ROWLANDS

Author of "The Flower of Fate,"

"Woman Against Woman," &c., &c.

\*\*\*\*\*

This story abounds in spirited scenes, with dramatic action of the highest order, and founded on a plot which contains many startling surprises.

## Society

**SIR FRANCIS KNOLLYS**, the King's Private Secretary, has decided to retain his surname, and will henceforth be known as Lord Knollys. The new peer is an extremely popular personage with all his friends and acquaintances, and general hope was expressed that he would not on accession to the Peerage select a title which would, in a sense, conceal his identity. There has been a question of his becoming Lord Caversham, and the territorial distinction will be incorporated in the full style and title. He becomes Lord Knollys of Caversham in the county of Oxford, but will be known simply as Lord Knollys.

**SIR GEORGE WHITE**, the defender of Lady-smith, and present Governor of Gibraltar, was sixty-seven on July 7. He has been in the Army since 1853, and served through the Indian Mutiny, the Afghan War of 1878-80, the Nile Expedition of 1894-85, the Burma campaign of the following year, and other expeditions before the South African War. The actions of Charasia and Candahar account for Sir George White's V.C. At the former, when his men had halted in the assault of a steep mountain side, he snatched up a rifle and rushed forward alone, killing the leader of the enemy, and compelling his men by his gallantry to complete the advance. At the final assault on Candahar he led the charge through a hot fire, and himself captured a gun.

The Coronation baronetcy conferred on Sir Frederick Treves will not be the great surgeon's only reward for his successful conveyance of the King "out of danger." For his four weeks' attendance at Sandringham and recovery of the King from typhoid fever in 1871 Sir William Gull received £10,000, as well as the dignity of baronet. Twice this amount was paid to Sir Morell Mackenzie for his treatment of the late Emperor Frederick, and in addition he was presented with the Order of the Red Eagle. The doctors who attended Queen Victoria in her last illness received 2,000 guineas each, while Dr. Lapponi's skill in removing a cyst from the Pope's side a few years ago was recompensed with £500. But the record in medical fees is held by the ancestor of the present Lord Mayor of London, Dr. Dimesdale, who received for his journey to St. Petersburg and vaccination of the Empress Catherine II. £10,000 as his fee, £5,000 for travelling expenses, and also the title of baron and a life pension of £500 a year.

**SIR FREDERICK TREVES** has certainly earned a generous reward for his skill. At little more than a moment's notice he placed his whole time at the King's service, and for at least seven days and nights he never went to bed, snatching sleep at Buckingham Palace at odd moments. His daughter's wedding occurred during those critical days, and it was only when she drove herself to the Palace and put the case before her father that he took a hurried half-hour to attend the quiet ceremony.

The succession to the premier dukedom has been changed by the death at the early age of twenty-three, of the Earl of Arundel. The Duke of Norfolk's brother, Lord Edmund Talbot, M.P. for the Chichester division of Sussex, thus becomes heir-presumptive to the dukedom. "Pray for my little son," was the injunction telegraphed to his friends by the Duke when the illness of his son, which began with his birth and grew severer a year ago, began to be mortal. The "little son" was, in truth, twenty-two years of age; but he had never grown up, remaining all his life a boy, with a sweet face, half-blind, blond, with almost albino-like fairness, and suffering from a general failure of nervous power.

"Is there any art in drinking wine?" asks a western contemporary. There is, but there is still greater art in getting over drinking wine the next morning.

## Helpful Talks

BY THE EDITOR.

*The Editor is pleased to hear from his readers at any time.*

*All letters must give the name and address of the writers, not for publication, but as a guarantee of good faith.*

**ENID.**—The Fahrenheit thermometer is the one most commonly used in England.

**MARIE.**—About five thousand kinds of butterflies are known. One kind is used for food in Australia by the savages. Butterflies fly only in the day-time.

**TULIE.**—It is proper to consult the parents of a young lady before you consider yourself engaged to her. There is no form or ceremony of giving the ring.

**CUMOVE.**—The Suez Canal was officially opened on November 17, 1869. The company by which it was constructed was organized by M. de Lesseps in 1858.

**ANITA.**—Five feet five inches is very tall for a girl of fourteen. You will probably not grow much more. Take plenty of outdoor exercise and you will develop.

**RUSTICITY.**—Haystacks sometimes take fire because the hay, having become damp, decays, and passes on to a state of fermentation, in which chemical changes occur, during which heat is evolved, and hence spontaneous combustion.

**IVY.**—It is only a strained morality which creates a fear of ill-effects from matter inserted simply to raise a smile. The mirth is innocent enough in itself, and cannot be misapplied by a mind untutored in depravity. A judicious care shall be exercised, however, to meet your wishes, for my desire is to please all and offend none.

**MATEE.**—Vinegar can be made in three weeks by mixing, in the following proportions, one quart of treacle, one pint of yeast, and three gallons of warm rain water. Put the mixture into a keg or barrel with the bung-hole open, but protected with gauze against insects.

**COUNTRY COUSIN.**—The secret of being happy is being employed. Idle people torment themselves at home and abroad. Home-sickness can never be overcome by moping in a corner. Go to work diligently. Assist your friend in her domestic duties and do all your own sewing.

**WILLIAM.**—The waters of some springs are impregnated with mineral matters because the water passes through beds of soda, lime, magnesia, carbonic acid, oxide of iron, sulphate of iron, etc., and takes up in some degree the particles of those minerals, according to the proportion in which they abound.

**RUSKIN.**—To bleach false hair, wigs, etc., it has been found that gaseous chlorine is the most effectual. The hair should be cleaned for this purpose by a warm solution of soda, and washed afterwards with water. While moist it is put into a jar and chlorine gas introduced until the hair in the jar looks greenish. It is then allowed to stand twenty-four hours. If necessary, repeat the operation.

**SADIE.**—Having treated you so ungallantly, it is your duty to cut the gentleman's acquaintance. No man has a right to monopolize the time of a lady friend and lead her to suppose that he loves her alone and then without a moment's warning to jilt her, as this one has done. It is, to say the least, a most reprehensible action, as it places the lady in a very undesirable position among her friends and acquaintances. Still, I feel sure that one possessing your charms will have no difficulty in winning the love of some true man, who will not use your heart as a mere plaything.

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## FRAZER'S TABLETS, LTD.,

95, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.



**SIR WILLIAM.**—Bathe night and morning in cold water in which a large piece of rock salt has been placed. Good office hand. You are probably straightforward and businesslike.

**THE THREE GEMS.**—1. Tied with red, the darkest shade of brown; tied with white, a beautiful nut-brown; tied with grey, a silky lawn. The specimens are very nicely plaited, and evince neatness, cleanliness, and tidiness on the part of the senders.

**LILLIE.**—1. Simply bow. 2. Shake hands with the host and hostess. 3. Express regret that you are unable to accept the invitation. You need not give a reason. 4. The subject is too vast. Write a story, and I will look at it and tell you what I think of it.

**PERCILLIOUS.**—The words "facetious" and "abstemious" contain all the vowels in their regular order. When used as adverbs, by the addition of the syllable "ly," they furnish the other occasional vowel, y; but I know of no word in which all of these and w may be found.

**AMINA.**—A soap, said to be equal to any wash mixture, very searching, but not injurious to the fabric of hands, is made as follows:—Five pounds of white bar soap, four pounds of sal soda, half a pound of borax, and one ounce of ammonia. Dissolve these materials in five quarts of water. When perfectly dissolved pour the liquid into seven gallons of soft water, and mix thoroughly.

**CONSTANT READER.**—Warts, it is said, may be thus destroyed:—Tie a silken thread tightly round the base of the wart; if narrow, this stops the supply of nourishment necessary to its growth, and it dies away; but where the base is extensive, and the wart is hard, then the application of spirits of salts, gradually applied in a small quantity at a time, regularly, every day, will remove them effectually, and without the danger attending most caustic preparations.

**DIANA.**—Iphigenia was a daughter of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, who, standing as a victim ready to be sacrificed to appease the rage of Diana, was, by that goddess, transformed into a white hart, carried to Tauris, and made her priestess. The wrath of Diana was caused by the killing, by Agamemnon, of a stag in her grove, and the sacrifice of Iphigenia was deemed indispensable to propitiate the gods.

**ALBUM.**—Express your kindly wishes for your lady-love in the following verse:—

"Of winged things whose quivers  
Hold happy hours for hearts,  
Of rosy Fate's sweet givers  
Of all that joy imparts;  
Of brightest thoughts whose pinions  
Set rapture where they rest,  
Of pleasure's daintiest minions,  
Mayst thou entrap the best:  
And hold them, safely hidden,  
Where Time can steal them ne'er.  
Thy slaves, for thee when bidden,  
To make all seasons fair."

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Beware of Injurious Imitations.

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Of all Chemists, 74d., 1s. 1/6d., and 2s. 9d. per box.  
**G. WHELPTON & SON,**  
3 & 4, Crane Court, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

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at a moment's notice makes delicious Custard—rich and creamlike without eggs, risk, or trouble.

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25 MAR 1903



# THE LONDON READER

of Literature, Science, Art, and General Information.

PART 501. VOL. LXXIX—OCTOBER, 1902

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